

VI. AFRICA

The late 1980s trend pushing Africa towards becoming an increasingly important drug hub continued in 1997-1998⁷³. Cannabis cultivation is spreading throughout all regions of sub-Saharan Africa in response to agricultural crisis. This report illustrates the general trend through numerous case studies: Senegal, Gambia, Togo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, ex-Zaire), Madagascar, and South Africa. Cannabis crops represent a triple threat. They menace the development of legal agricultural crops for which they tend to “substitute”, thus jeopardizing, in the case of food crops, supplies to cities. Cannabis farming also threatens security in that profits from drugs contribute to financing armed conflicts (in Casamance-Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Sudan, DRC, and Congo), while eradication campaigns constitute a weapon for government authorities to wield against ethnic or political minorities (Senegal, Sudan, and Egypt). Finally, the threat of cannabis crops is felt in the health sector, as the availability of marijuana encourages excessive consumption especially among young people.

Overall one of the newer elements in Africa is the extent of the use of all types of drugs in close relation to trafficking routes. If alcohol and marijuana still remain the most consumed drugs, markets for all other narcotics (synthetic stimulants, Mandrax, heroin, and crack) are growing rapidly, as witnessed for example by the situation in South Africa⁷⁴ and in the countries of the Gulf of Guinea⁷⁵. East African countries (Tanzania, Mozambique, and Kenya) and Indian Ocean countries (Mauritius in particular), which are hit head on by trafficking originating in the Indian sub-continent, are undergoing a significant rise in domestic heroin consumption. This also allows traffickers to take advantage of the economic liberalization under way in these countries in order to recycle the profits gained from these internal markets and from transit activities⁷⁶. Trafficking in hard drugs, particularly cocaine, by integrating into arms smuggling networks, also contributes to financing armed conflicts such as in Angola and the DRC.

⁷³ Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Yemen were covered in OGD: *The World Geopolitics of Drugs, 1995-1996*

⁷⁴ On South Africa, see the chapter on “South Africa and its Environment”.

⁷⁵ On this region also see the chapter on “Gulf of Guinea: Toward a Common Drug Market?”.

⁷⁶ On this subject, also see the chapter on “The ‘Caribbeanization’ of the Indian Ocean”.

ANGOLA

Even though international influences (East-West conflict, Cuban and South African intervention) which have contributed to Angola's instability seem to be diminishing, the country is still experiencing a highly disorganized internal situation. It seems therefore, that internal factors are more probably the cause. In much the same way as its two Congolese neighbours, Angola seems to have "organized its chaos" to benefit the ruling classes (whether they be in power or in the opposition). Predatory exploitation of resources is today probably one of the major obstacles to a return to a more normal situation (even though this has never really existed on Angolan territory). A sophisticated combination of petrol and diamond trading have enabled the elite to weave in between formal and informal activity at all levels of political, economic and social life.

This same combination drives a wedge into international action between those who seek institutional and spatial rationality and those who operate mines and mineral deposits. Angola is not densely populated (10 to 12 million inhabitants) and has a high level of poverty and a dramatic lack of infrastructure, but it remains solvent in the eyes of the international community, thanks to its oil deposits. Petroleum installations (and the fact that they have always been spared during military operations) allow the country to negotiate its "normalisation" from a position of force. Thus, for example, Angola is the only member-country of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) not to have signed the Mmabatho Protocol on joint drug-control policy in the region. Control of resources at an international level between the state and its international partners allows a "permissive attitude" towards large-scale illicit trade through the various port facilities. But internally, well-organised trafficking networks for diamonds and arms run by the opposition offer "facilities" for other goods, which have been taken on board by the Angolan trading networks recently. While there are other drugs on the Angolan scene (especially cannabis), cocaine plays a very special role, as it has been successfully interwoven with the networks referred to above.

UNITA's South African Operations

The fighting that broke out again in July 1998 between government forces and the rebels of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) will probably result in the reactivation of the clandestine networks supplying Jonas Savimbi's men. In early August 1998, barely a week before the bombing of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam, there was a meeting in Lubumbashi, DRC, between top UNITA officers, three former Mobutu generals, and intelligence officers from Uganda and Rwanda. Well-informed sources said the talks focused on supplying arms and ammunition to rebel groups in Angola and ways of paying for them. In this context, it should be noted that cocaine networks, alongside those for diamonds and other precious minerals, have been a negotiable resource for several years now. The fact is that since the Angolan civil war broke out again in 1992/93, UNITA's networks have been involved in smuggling drugs into the regional market (especially South Africa) and internationally, (particularly to Europe, via the former Zaire). The recent geopolitical developments in Central Africa have only strengthened these connections.

The downfall in 1997 of the regimes in power in Zaire (Mobutu) and Congo (Lissouba), which was obtained with military assistance from the government of Angola, deprived UNITA of its main rear bases. The rebels then had to rely exclusively on their supply routes from Zambia and South Africa. On March 5, 1998, the Angolan ambassador in Lusaka, Zambia, condemned the infiltration of UNITA

troops on Zambian territory with a view to turning the refugee camps in North-West Province, along the border with Angola, into military bases.

Usually well-informed sources say that Savimbi's main partner in Zambia is Vernon Mwaanga, the former minister of foreign affairs close to President Frederick Chiluba, who had to resign in 1994 under pressure from donor countries which accused him of being involved in the drug trade. Mwaanga's early retirement from the Zambian cabinet has not kept him from continuing to wield much power within Chiluba's party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), where he is known as the man of sensitive missions. From Zambia, cocaine and Mandrax are shipped south by road and air. But there are networks that link UNITA's bases and South Africa directly. In 1997, Lusaka had to ban a South African private air company, *Metex International*, accused of delivering arms to the Angolan guerrillas, from flying over Zambian territory. Sources allege that the ban, which was announced under pressure from Luanda and its allies, was purely formal and that the deliveries continued.

On January 20, 1998, the Angolan air force intercepted a *DC-4* belonging to *Congo Air Express*, a private South African company, as it was flying equipment to Savimbi's troops. The pilot has confirmed that he has flown supplies to UNITA's bases, in particular in Andulo and Bailundo in central Angola, on a regular basis during the last two years. Indeed, UNITA controls over 80 airfields along Angola's borders with both Congos, Zambia and Namibia. Until about six months ago, the planes mainly flew in arms. After that, the pilot says the shipments were mostly made up of building material and, as was the case in January, mining equipment. The publicity surrounding the interception (the Angolan military, which now has two radars supplied recently by the United States, has warned that in future any plane violating its air space will be shot down) was mostly meant as a warning for the many private-sector air carriers, most of them South African, specializing in flying contraband in Southern Africa skies, from Luanda to Maputo via Lusaka and Harare.

The route followed by *Congo Air Express's DC-4* was a classic: take off from Lanseria international airport, near Johannesburg; refuelling at Maun international airport, Botswana, on the edge of the Okavango delta; flying over Zambia toward Congo-Brazzaville, its official destination; finally, veering off to land at one of UNITA's headquarters, in this case Andulo (where the landing strip had been lengthened shortly before in order to accommodate medium-range aircraft). Maun has become a focal point for adventurer-pilots from many parts of the world – Zimbabwe, South Africa, New Zealand, Britain, etc. – who are employed by the private air carriers for wages ranging between US \$6000 a month for a beginner up to \$15,000 for an “old hand”. As far as drug and arms traffickers are concerned, the Lanseria international airport in a Johannesburg suburb is one of the least controlled ports of entry into South Africa. Ten to twenty planes land there every day and it officially closes at 7 p.m. (the customs office, manned by a single officer, closes at 5 p.m.), after which time planes land at their own risk. Many pilots are willing to take a chance, especially since the danger is not great. Thus, on May 25, 1997, a plane filled with gold, hard currency and diamonds belonging to the late Zairian president Mobutu, then on the run, landed at Lanseria. Lanseria was also the headquarters of *Million Air*, the company belonging to Veejay Goswami, an Indian accused of being the largest importer of Mandrax in South Africa, and arrested in Dubai in July 1997⁷⁷.

Today's “scheduled” flights have merely taken up routes used by the “commercial” flights that used to be operated by the South African military at the height of the civil war in Angola between 1975 and

⁷⁷ See the chapter on “South Africa and its Environment”.

1989. The end of apartheid and the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela never really challenged the support Savimbi has always enjoyed in South Africa. Thus, until the independence of Namibia in 1990, the town of Rundu, close to the border with Angola, was the Mecca of the networks in charge of supplying UNITA with arms, food, fuel and equipment. In partnership with the highest circles of the South African military and the white politicians in Pretoria, some businessmen, often of Portuguese origin, ran huge warehouses in Rundu, in which transited ivory, rhinoceros horns, diamonds as well as Mandrax tablets from Zambia before being shipped to South Africa. It seems that cocaine imported from Brazil has become a part of the goods handled by the networks supporting UNITA, at least since 1994.

Furthermore, Angola's diamond resources, 70% of which are under UNITA control, increasingly act as a magnet for international criminal organizations looking for money laundering opportunities. The South African police has information on the presence of Russian citizens involved in criminal activities taking place in Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. Russian organized crime in Southern Africa seems to be specializing in smuggling arms and diamonds, and in money laundering, especially through investment in licit businesses and real estate in Western Cape Province, whose capital is Cape Town. For instance, Russian mobsters reportedly have the intention of buying the rights to mine diamond deposits in Angola while at the same time purchasing large quantities of contraband diamonds. Under this scheme, the licit trade in gems mined in Angola would serve as cover for diamond-smuggling operations. Similarly, a South African billionaire of Italian origin, a presumed Cosa Nostra member suspected of cocaine-smuggling by the anti-mafia brigade in Rome, has attempted to buy diamond concessions in UNITA-controlled areas⁷⁸.

Cocaine Smuggling: A Commonplace Activity

While cocaine-running appears to be a significant source of income for UNITA, the drug is also smuggled through ports and airports controlled by government forces. While Interpol communicated seizures in Angola in 1995-1996 of just 9 kilograms of cocaine, over 100 kg of that drug destined to or having transited through Luanda were seized during the same period. However, these seizures were all made after (Namibia, RSA) or before Angola (Brazil, Europe, United States), but never in the country itself. So it seems clear that ports and networks in the "useful zone" of Angola are involved in transnational trafficking, even though local seizures and drug-control results in general are minimal. One could even say that the lack of results, in this particular case, indicates that the traffic enjoys protection.

Senior officials in the Angolan Interior, Defence, and Agriculture and Rural Development ministries deny that the lack of results in seizing drugs is the consequence of systematic "protection", arguing that they are due to the lack of means while also admitting that the fight against drugs is not a priority. The authorities refuse to go into the details of seizures, saying that major trafficking mainly concerns regions which are not controlled by the state. Statistics are never released, which indicates that they do not have the means to collect them.

However, these seizures, declared or not, are no indication of the volume of trafficking or of its nature. Intercepted smugglers (often working for Nigerian networks) and the volumes they transport would seem to indicate an average scale of activity which is not highly structured. But on the other hand, according to some international officials (based in Angola and neighbouring countries) and to the small-time traffickers themselves, there are other, much larger, trafficking networks that are either purely

⁷⁸ See the chapter on "South Africa and its Environment".

commercial (Brazil, Portugal), or political (Cuba, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia). These networks use cross-border contacts in the south (Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe) and in the north (mainly DRC) which are specialized in trading diamonds, arms, stolen cars, etc., and which today are evolving towards cocaine. By their very nature (protected trafficking), these networks are undetectable. However, intelligence sources from Western countries have frequently made reference to them. The CIA, for example, has outlined in its last annual reports, the growing role of Angola as a “platform and transit area for the cocaine trade”, without going into further detail.

Additional information can be obtained by studying cocaine prices in Angola. In Luanda prices are inversely proportional to the social status of the consumer: for the ruling classes (and above all their offspring) cocaine is not particularly expensive (US \$50 per gram on average), the further down the social scale one goes, the more expensive drugs become, reaching \$80-\$100 per gram for the middle classes (those close to economic and political power) and foreigners. Small-time dealers, who are often users themselves, buy cocaine at \$60-\$80 a gram and sell it to the drillers and miners in north-east Angola, who are cut off from Luanda, for more than \$100 dollars.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (EX-ZAIRE)

The originality of the “Mobutu System” lies in the way it preyed on the nation’s wealth, smuggling activities, and informal markets. It was an integrated system involving the participation of the population at every level. At the top of the chain, regime dignitaries amassed colossal fortunes, while the poorer classes adopted a survival strategy. This latter included small-scale drug trafficking involving local alcohol, marijuana, and, over the past few years, heroin and cocaine. It was believed that military officers and certain big businessmen were involved in narcotics trafficking on a larger scale. But not until the fall of Kinshasa on May 17, 1997 was proof of this available.

Zaire was already known to be one of the largest cannabis producers in Central Africa. With the country suffering a crisis and the security situation precarious, this illegal crop seems to offer one of the best economic alternatives for a large number of farmers.

The predatory management which prevailed in Zaire under Mobutu left the population to its own devices. It is difficult to evaluate completely the influence of changes brought about by Kabila’s arrival to power on cannabis production, and marijuana trafficking and consumption. The new government must bring some order to the country, and fighting drugs is not a priority for the moment. What is known is that the taxes paid to law enforcement agents on the transport of marijuana have increased. One year after Kabila’s arrival, drug selling networks are still in place, and it is probable that networks for hard narcotics have sprung up again as well.

Drug Stocks of Mobutu Supporters

One of the immediate consequences of the coming to power of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL), was a significant worsening of the drug situation in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The first reason was that the belongings of former president Mobutu’s supporters, most of whom have left the city, were looted: small-time dealers and wholesalers, who knew their suppliers well, took advantage of the situation to grab stocks of drugs which the Mobutists had not wanted to be burdened with as they fled. According to several detailed reports from OGD correspondents who look after drug addicts in the streets of

Kinshasa, young dealer-users found about 120 kilograms of heroin at the home of a general in the Zairian army, in the upmarket Ma Campagne neighborhood. The sharing out of the drug led to a violent brawl in which several of them were injured. They then sold the heroin rapidly on the city streets. A shop belonging to one Lebanese trader, known to be an international trafficker, was raided by another group who took 70 kg of heroin and 38 kg of cocaine. But this second group, better organized, decided to divide up the haul evenly and then to spread resale over a long period so as to avoid the snags of running out of supplies too quickly. In the Barumbu neighborhood, a central red-light district where all sorts of drugs are in circulation, an Indian trafficker was taken by surprise when the AFDL turned up just as he was packing some marijuana to send to Europe in 50-kg sacks. The drug is now being supplied to local consumers. These stocks of drugs were unloaded onto the local market at unbeatable prices, leading to a boom in consumption.

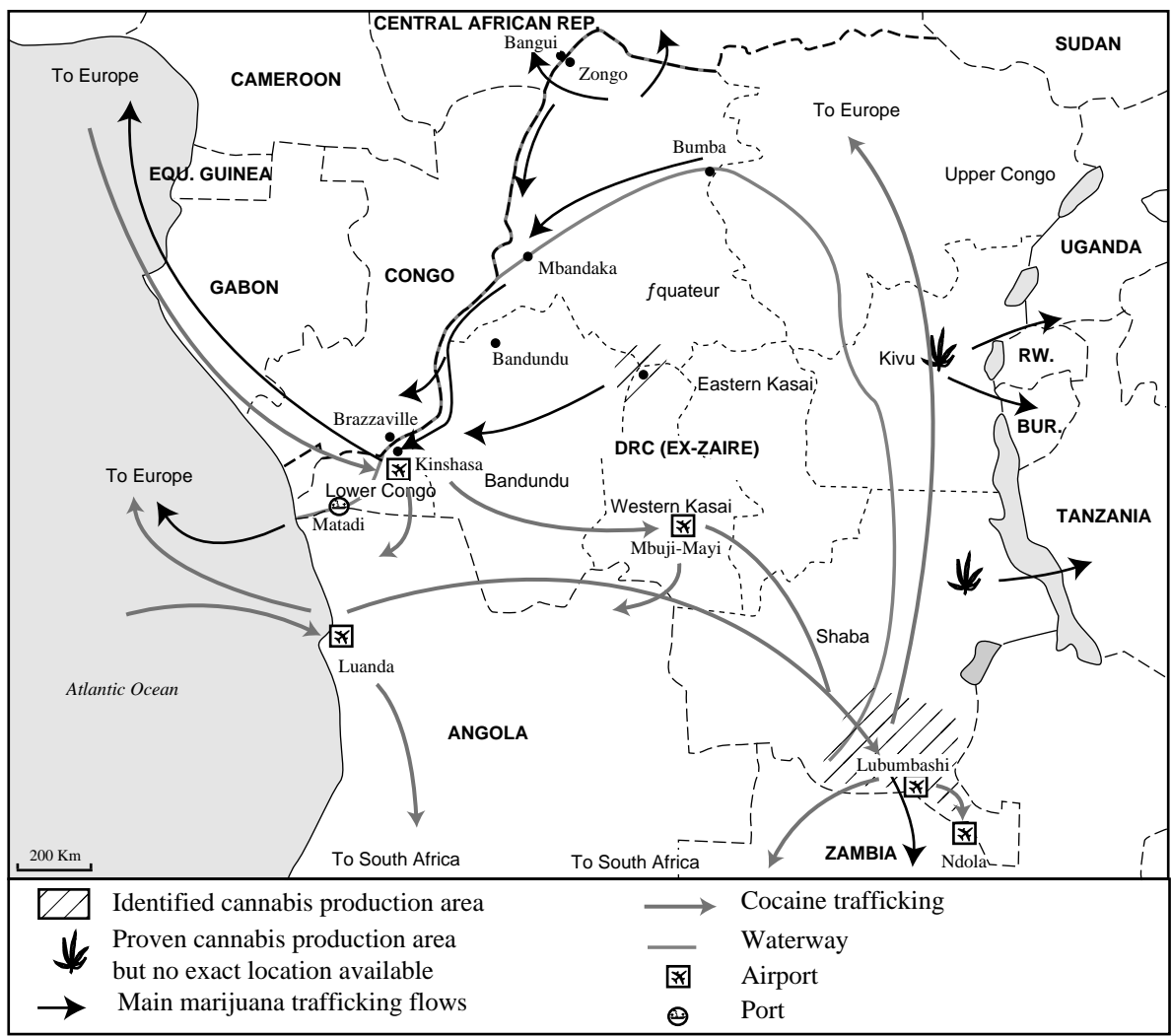
Their “discovery” also highlights the gulf in Africa between official statistics on seizures of hard drugs (not that such statistics exist in former Zaire) and the real quantities in transit. No doubt similar situations prevail in other countries where drug traffickers enjoy protection at the highest level⁷⁹. The second reason for the spread of drug dependence is that since the “liberation” of Kinshasa, most checks on road and river traffic have been dropped. Under the previous government, it was necessary to grease the palms of officials so they would let goods through — although they did have to make a few token seizures of marijuana to pretend they were doing their job. Now boats and cars can move around without hindrance. Some of the marijuana, cocaine and traditional spirits on their way to Kinshasa take route No.1, which starts at the border with Angola and crosses Lower Zaire province, while some uses route No.2 from Eastern and Western Kasai provinces through the east of Bandundu province (and especially the Kuilu and Kwango districts). By river, drugs are transported along the Zaire from the provinces of Equateur and Upper Zaire, through the western part of Bandundu in Maidombé district.

According to information furnished by OGD correspondents, under Mobutu law enforcement agents were paid \$5 on average to let a sack of marijuana pass. Today, however, they demand \$60 per sack, but usually give in if they are offered a minimum of \$15.

Cannabis as an Alternative to Agricultural Difficulties

The bankruptcy of the state had resulted in the eradication of public services, obliging the citizens of Zaire to cover the cost of civil servants’ wages (in particular teachers and doctors). The breakdown of the communication systems has resulted in the isolated operation of farming entities, resulting from the impossibility of sending their food productions to the urban centres. The production of export-oriented cash crops, which is not supported by the state, has seen a decline. The country’s economy has turned informal, and this starts at the highest levels of the state, whose officials have resorted to all sorts of trafficking. Cannabis has become a viably economic alternative for the farmers whose production was sold at a much higher price, under an organised form of commercialisation. The buyers came directly to pick up the products on site, some of them even funding the crops ahead of time.

⁷⁹ See the chapter on “Gulf of Guinea: Toward a Common Drug Market?”.



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Map 10: Cannabis production and marijuana and cocaine trafficking in the DRC

Cannabis is a plant which is present over the whole territory of the DRC. Having already been grown over several decades on a small scale, since the 1980s it has seen development both at the level of surface areas farmed in the midst of agricultural entities and in the number of farmers implicated. Cannabis growing has developed in all of the provinces, but information is available only on the regions of Kinshasa, the Batéké plateau, the Equator, the Lower Congo and the Bandundu. According to several sources, production is increasing in every one of the above mentioned regions. In most cases, this production involves small farmers. OGD could only obtain more precise information on the Bandundu.

At the farming level, the growing of cannabis follows two distinct dynamic formats. Some farmers launch into production on their own (often with experience gained within their family), others work under the directives of dealers who finance the crops, and make advance payments in cash or in the form of essential products. This system is particularly developed on the Batéké plateau. Those who organise it are Lebanese, West African or Congolese dealers. Despite the significance of political changes seen in May 1997, the system was still operating five months later. Thus, containers continue to leave the area, dealers having managed to federate the production among several producers. In the Bandundu and Lower Congo areas, smaller sums are paid in advance by the buyers. Cannabis is generally planted in association with cassava, maize, groundnuts, or in dense forest areas so as to hide the plantations. The Equator Province, certainly the foremost production zone, offers specific characteristics in the production of cannabis. Within this province, cannabis plantations are effectively seen to cover several hectares, or even tens of hectares (30 ha). They are often undivided, totally dedicated to this single crop, and located in the middle of forestry concessions. On this subject, it is within loads of logs that the cannabis is forwarded to the port of Matadi and then exported to Europe. On these plantations, the work is provided by wage earning workers (often members of the Twa tribe) remunerated not in money, but in kind: bicycles, soap, food.

Local and National Marijuana Trafficking

Despite the change in the regime, a significant part of narcotic networks has remained in place. For dealers who follow the production and encourage it, political changes have not seemed to impede their presence or even their activities. Several observers have noticed an increase in the flow of marijuana toward Kinshasa since the new authorities have arrived. The “check-points” of the predatory soldiers of the old regime having disappeared, the road to the capital seems to be open for the time being.

The producers themselves sold part of their production retail to their consumers. There is thus a small local traffic in which the producers can be directly implicated. This level takes on a wider base through the supplying of regional urban centres. In zones close to a border, there can be a small crossborder traffic of marijuana as is the case for all food products or essential goods. It is sometimes easier to reach an urban centre on the other side of a border than to reach a town in ones’ own country. The small crossborder dealings are in the hands of small smugglers but they can involve producers who have already had to get involved in smuggling in order to evacuate their product (for instance coffee in the east of the country towards Rwanda and Uganda). In the outskirts of Kinshasa, producers sell marijuana to small dealers. The unit of sale is the *M'bodi* (which represents a fistful) which costs 500 000 zaires. Small buyers sell retail in town. They sell pellets which cost 20 000 zaires.

When the herbal cannabis leaves the production region for Kinshasa, it travels over the same roads as other goods. A large part of the traffic is performed along the riverways. Given the poor state of the roads, river traffic is the main evacuation route for these products, in particular between provinces and the country (Equator, Upper Congo) and the capital city, Kinshasa. In 1995, 80 bags containing 25 kg

of marijuana each were seized on a “ whaler ” (name given to the boats which provide transportation for legal or illegal merchandise along the riverways). At Kinshasa, series of small private ports, where no inspection of the goods is really performed, had come to be. For security reasons the owners, often close to the former regime, had recruited soldiers from the regular army. For the regions close to the capital (Bandundu, Lower Congo) bags containing marijuana are carried in trucks belonging to food traders where the marijuana is hidden (in cassava, *Chikwange*, maize, groundnuts, cassettes or cans of powdered milk).

But smuggled goods also arrive from neighboring countries. Farmers in Zaire Province in Angola travel to the DRC to sell their produce, in Matadi or in Kinshasa. The price varies from \$12 to \$15 for an amount measured by a large tin can of *Nido* (powdered milk). Travel to Kinshasa is undertaken by train. Unofficial taxes, collected by Customs agents in both Angola and Congo, are fixed on both sides of the border. Out of between 60 and 70 “cans” crossing the border, three of the cans are handed over to the officials, in addition to \$3. Since the fall of Mobutu, the rates have risen on the Congo side of the border, which resulted in the Angolans raising their prices to similar levels. The profits from the sale of the drugs are often immediately reinvested in the purchase of staple goods in Kinshasa.

A well-oiled international traffic

When powerful dealers are involved, who are generally implicated in production either directly in the forestry concessions or through the system of advance payment for the crops, marijuana only travels through Kinshasa. In Kinshasa, it is packaged for export. In general, major dealers used intermediaries responsible for contact with the producers, and in charge of picking up the crop. Some shipment loads represent up to 300 kg of marijuana. Bags used to package coffee or groundnuts are used. When these loads are intended for export, it is under that indication that they are declared. Another form of camouflage used for export consists in stuffing logs with cannabis. For this purpose, the bark of the log is removed with care, and cavities are sunk into it where carefully packaged marijuana is inserted, and finally the bark is stuck back onto the log. This implies collusion within the wood processing plants. To identify the “loaded logs”, a very specific and easily recognised number system is used. These loads are shipped out of Matadi to Europe, through the port of Antwerp. A network of this kind has been identified, involving Congolese, Belgian and French nationals. The order was received from Brussels, sent to Congolese forestry operators. The load was received by the Belgians and the French and then sent to Brussels and Paris. In these two cities, distribution was entrusted to Congolese nationals. Another network identified, and again intended for Europe, consisted in hiding the marijuana in furniture. A special wood working factory in Kinshasa was used for this purpose.

A share of marijuana exports leaves the DRC by air. In 1996, a 108- kg load was discovered in Brussels. The marijuana was hidden in paintings. A second catch related to this same activity was to take place in Kinshasa.

The local level of corruption and the predatory attitude of the law enforcement authorities which prevails in the former Zaire made any form of inspection particularly difficult. If the situation at the International Kinshasa airport has clearly improved during the months which followed the advent of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, it is again possible to escape customs inspection.

TANZANIA

Tanzania, although traditionally and geographically part of East Africa, has chosen to join the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). This is because the SADC has greater political stability and larger economic potential than Kenya and the countries of the Great Lakes. Tanzania is both the main port of entry into Africa for products exported from Southeast Asia, with which it has long-standing trade ties, and the port of entry into the SADC countries for goods from East Africa, especially via Kenya. It is therefore hardly surprising that the country seems to be one of the principal drug transit routes between Asia and Europe. A significant number of Tanzanian nationals are involved in international drug trafficking, particularly heroin. Banned substances arrive in the country either directly by air and sea from producer countries, or through neighboring countries (Kenya, Zambia or Mozambique). They are generally shipped on to South Africa, Europe or the United States.

The early establishment of Arab trading posts has given Tanzania a tradition of links between the hinterland and seaborne merchants trading in slaves, diamonds and gold. The balanced development of towns and the countryside envisioned by founding president Julius Nyerere has now run up against an urban population explosion, pauperization of the most deprived classes, and the revival of movements for local autonomy and nationalism (especially in Zanzibar), all this against a background of economic crisis. Anything the government tries to do has to be negotiated with a wealth of precautions to take account of people's susceptibilities, differences between communities and revolutionary attainments. The resulting relative conservatism is all the more dangerous because the economic crisis is not going away. Flourishing corruption and the race to survive or get rich quick are stimulating increased drug consumption and trafficking.

Cannabis production

Cannabis production, which is on the increase although not booming as in other countries in the region, is still restricted to small plantations, often hidden among maize and cassava crops. It is mostly grown under forest cover in mountain areas, especially in the south-west, although it is present throughout the country. The surface areas under cultivation are larger in the Iringa, Nakele and Njombe regions; smaller plots are found around Tabora and Mwanza, which borders Lake Victoria. There are also some plantations on the offshore islands. The authorities reckon that Tanzanian cannabis is not exported and that the prices paid to producers give them no incentive to grow more, given the wide availability of the product on the domestic market. Prices are also held down because enforcement against traditional users is not severe.

The Tanzanian drug control brigade knows perfectly well where the drug is grown, but considers that systematically destroying fields of cannabis grown for traditional consumption would have an adverse effect both on the consumption of other drugs – especially heroin, which is already gaining ground – and on cannabis production itself. A senior Tanzanian official said that enforcement in the south-west would jack up prices, resulting in more cannabis being grown and then sold on the international market.

Trafficking networks

The networks smuggling heroin, Mandrax and hashish from Asia have now added cocaine to their product range. The result is that networks are appearing that can supply several drugs to different markets in response to demand. If there is a demand for cocaine in Africa, for example, the Tanzanian networks are able to meet it with cocaine they buy in India, Pakistan or the Far East.

The first cases of confiscation of cocaine in Tanzania (or from Tanzanian nationals) were recorded in 1992. Since then they have mushroomed, and couriers have been arrested carrying both heroin and cocaine (in Greece, Italy, the United States and Tanzania itself).

Drugs are smuggled across all Tanzania's land frontiers and through the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. Transcontinental traffickers use Dar es-Salaam airport for preference, but they also use Arusha, which handles a large flow of tourists. Whether the traffic is cross-border or intercontinental, all the places mentioned have a complementary function. For example, Zanzibar is used as a crossing-point for traffic between Kenya and Tanzania (to avoid the relatively well-controlled land border between the two countries), but it is also a port of entry, by sea and especially by air, for drugs shipped from the Gulf (Muscat, Dubai) to Dar es-Salaam and Mombassa.

The drugs smuggled between Kenya and Tanzania are heroin and, to a lesser extent, Mandrax (methaqualone). They pass through all frontier towns, from the port of Mwanza on Lake Victoria to Mtadikeni near the Indian Ocean. The main crossing-points are Sirari on highway B6 near Lake Victoria, and Namanga and Himp, on either side of Mount Kilimanjaro, on tourist routes to Arusha. Very few hauls are made in these towns or on these roads, partly because couriers prefer little-used tracks through deserts or game reserves, and partly because the understaffed Anti-Drugs Unit (ADU) does not have men on these borders. But the ADU says that much of the traffic between Kenya and Tanzania now goes by sea from Mombassa to Dar es-Salaam, via Pemba and Zanzibar.

The OGD special envoy made this trip twice and confirmed the total absence of serious controls. At Pemba, Zanzibar and Dar es-Salaam, only one person picked at random out of hundreds of passengers was given a cursory check. The same goes for the land borders; when a truck is searched and documents checked, it is purely for form's sake. Any drug hauls are made on the basis of information received.

There is no change on the borders with Zambia and Malawi; only the substances being smuggled vary: methaqualone, plus cannabis (for Dar es-Salaam and Europe) and heroin (for Zambia and South Africa). At the Tunduma border post on highways from Tanzania to Zambia and Malawi and on the Tanzanian-Zambian Railroad, there is no ADU office, for lack of money. The police (CID), who are supposed to plug this gap, seem overwhelmed by the volume of legal traffic and "only act on information". From the D1 road, which links two cross-border roads, the T2 and the M1 (on the Zambian side), run dozens of mountain roads that are heavily used by cross-border smugglers. This region and its hinterland, in both Zambia and Tanzania, are used as safe havens and for storing merchandise that is moved quickly to replenish stocks on both sides of the border. Generally speaking, as in the rest of the SADC countries, national parks are ideal for cross-border trafficking, especially when they straddle several frontiers.

Lake Tanganyika and Lake Nyasa are also used, mainly for smuggling drugs into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Malawi. But the ferry between Kasanga, in Tanzania, and Mpulungi, in Zambia, is often used by individual heroin and methaqualone smugglers. The borders with the Great Lakes countries (Rwanda, Burundi and the RDC) are more strictly patrolled by the police and the army because of the armed conflicts in the area, but they have traditionally been crossed by large volumes of legal trade. The current politico-military situation, which may result in *de facto* autonomy for Kivu and the eastern Congolese region in general, whatever regime controls Kinshasa, opens up a new route for drugs networks, which have until now operated mainly between Angola and the DRC, handling mostly cannabis and cocaine. We may thus expect a redeployment of these networks operating across the eastern borders of the DRC.

Alongside the established trafficking, generally sponsored by Kivu politicians and army officers in league with Lebanese diamond and gold traders, a small-scale drug trade has developed among a population that sees no other economic alternatives. They have long been selling their wares on the Tanzanian and international markets. The anarchic situation in the eastern border regions of the DRC, where the informal economy is dominant and trading networks are already in place, attracts other activities that flourish in these conditions. Thus arms, drugs and stolen cars are being added to the range of legal trade goods and traditional Congolese products. Cannabis produced in the DRC for the expanding domestic market was already being exported to neighboring Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Zambia as well as Europe, especially Belgium and France. For the reasons explained above, these exports usually pass through the port of Dar es-Salaam.

Tanzanian courier-crewmen

The involvement of Tanzanian nationals in the international drug trade is now an established fact; they are particularly active in smuggling Southwest Asian heroin to Europe and the United States. They are also present in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. In 1996, out of 67 people with Tanzanian nationality (or traveling on a Tanzanian passport) arrested worldwide, 59 were held for smuggling heroin.

This state of affairs goes back to the 1970s, when seamen hired to work on mainly Greek- and Cypriot-registered vessels started using their contacts in Pakistan and their ability to enter Greece without a visa (their seaman's ticket is enough) to smuggle heroin into Europe through Italy. One successful trip can bring in four times their pay for a year, enabling them to buy houses and cars and, after a couple of trips, invest in a shop that will set them up for life. In a country where the average per capita annual income is US \$180 and a large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, this business success soon produced a rash of imitators.

But the couriers, who often use the drug themselves, also spread heroin abuse among the domestic population, especially as they can sell it at extremely low prices (\$1.5 a dose), close to the cost price in Pakistan of \$1 a dose. To get their supplies even more cheaply than in Pakistan, couriers nowadays often go as far as Afghanistan to buy their heroin. Of the 18 people arrested at Karachi airport between 30 January and 25 February 1996 for possessing heroin, eight were Tanzanian citizens. The quantities confiscated ranged from 140 grams to 2 kilograms. In April of that year, 12 out of 18 couriers arrested were Tanzanians, each carrying between 100 g and 700 g of heroin. Young Tanzanians are now traveling to Brazil and Peru to bring back comparable quantities of cocaine to sell on the South African or European markets. They are sometimes used as mules by Asian heroin wholesalers seeking to build stocks of cocaine.

Heroin consumption

Heroin consumption is growing fast in Tanzania. While smoking the drug is still the most widespread method, injection is gaining ground rapidly, especially in Zanzibar and Dar es-Salaam. Shooting heroin used to be the preserve of Asian- and Arab-origin businessmen, whose incomes enabled them to buy the drug, but now it seems to have spread not only to other well-off people but also to poor people hit by the recession. These form the majority of those admitted to psychiatric hospitals, mainly unemployed men aged between 20 and 30. Up to ten drug addicts a month seek admittance to psychiatric wards, which handle around 30 emergency cases a year. The annual number of heroin addicts registered is

around the same as for those seeking treatment for abuse of cannabis, which in Tanzania is considered to induce dependence.

A 0.1-gram dose of brown sugar (*kete*) costs \$1.5. A “thumbnail” of heroin – the amount remaining under the nail after taking a pinch from the bag – costs \$1, which is the lowest price encountered among the SADC countries.

The heroin consumed in Tanzania is mainly brown sugar, but some Chinese White is used by the well-off. This surge in heroin consumption – which is probably linked to the as yet ill-documented increase in HIV positivity – is the reason advanced by some drug workers (working on both the demand and supply sides of the problem) for the lukewarm official campaigns against cannabis use.

In tourist areas, the contrast between strict traditional morals (often based on the Islamic Sharia law) and the permissive attitudes of tourists and merchants (especially in Zanzibar), sometimes creates explosive situations. In Zanzibar, where the authorities were recently still maintaining that AIDS was practically non-existent, it is now admitted that there are hundreds of cases. More than 70% of recorded HIV-positivity cases are pregnant women, whose illness shows up in gynaecological tests. The problem is that the widespread permissiveness revealed by these results, whether it involves sexual promiscuity or drug-taking, is contrary to the image that Zanzibar seeks to project. It is therefore swept under the rug, and efforts to record cases of male HIV-positivity are blocked at the highest level.

KENYA

Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta international airport is plastered with police posters, sponsored by a private company, urging traffickers to “think twice” before trying to bring drugs into Kenya, and warning that they could “have ten years to regret it”. This has in no way affected Kenya’s position as an important transit point for heroin from the Indian sub-continent (and sometimes from the Golden Triangle) on its way to Europe. Methaqualone (Mandrax) produced in India is also moved through Kenya to the still flourishing South African market.

As well as being a hub for international drug trafficking, Kenya is also a booming consumer market. Cannabis (*bhang*) is grown in response to local demand, which also sucks in large volumes from Uganda. Heroin (brown sugar) is sold retail at “near-Pakistani” prices of between US \$3 to \$8 a “thumbnail” (the amount held under the nail is still the preferred street deal). After *bhang*, it is the most popular drug, not only in Nairobi and Mombassa but in all relatively large towns: Kisumu, Nakuru, Nanyuki, Malindi and even Marsabit, a remote locality in the north-east of the country. Kenyan qat, which can be grown and consumed legally, is considered to be the best in the region and is exported to Yemen, where consumption is legal, Zanzibar, where it is tolerated, and to Tanzania, Zambia and Saudi Arabia, where its use is, in theory, outlawed.

A Fragmented and Demoralized Society

Kenya, which since independence had been a safe destination for high-class safari tourism, has since 1990 been the scene of escalating internal conflicts that often come close to civil war. The democratic process set in motion then has given free rein to tribal (there are more than 35 ethnic groups), regional and religious discord. For example, the Moslem vote, which reaches 15% at national level, is concentrated mainly in the coastal strip and especially around the free port of Mombassa. Kalifi province experiences revolts almost every year, which accounts for a heavy military presence there. Anti-Western

feeling runs high and is expressed in many armed attacks on foreigners, resulting in some deaths. The Rift Valley (a traditional cannabis-producing area) whose game parks and nature reserves are an important source of foreign currency, also has endemic problems of violence due to the frustrations of the Masai, a cattle-herding tribe of former warriors who have been penned up for the benefit of the tourists and can no longer roam freely in their natural environment, the reserves (*Masai Mara*). “Troubles” are non-stop there and are becoming so in Turcana province, along the border with Sudan.

On top of tribal and religious frustrations there is clear hostility towards the Indo-Pakistani minority, which controls large parts of the economy and is accused, often hastily, of heading all the drug-trafficking networks. The economic influence of this group extends along the coastal strip of Kalifi province, the shores of Lake Victoria in Nyanza and Western provinces, and in Nairobi. What is more, large-scale corruption reaching from the highest levels of the state apparatus down to regional administrators, added to the popular perception that elections are systematically rigged and the legal system does the politicians’ bidding, criminalizes everything connected with politics. From the smallest street dealer up to the biggest import-export companies, criminal activities are defended as the only way to counter the authorities’ predatory practices. As an example of such practices, in less than a week after the American embassy bombing in August 1998 it became so obvious that the fund set up to help victims was being raided by administrators that several members of parliament demanded an independent body to run the fund on principles of “good governance” and “transparency”.

Trafficking: Impunity Extends its Reach

In this fragmented and suspicious society, in which criminality illustrates the accusation by assassinated opposition leader Robert Ouko that Kenya is “the country of a handful of millionaires and millions of starving people”, drug trafficking crosses all political, ethnic, regional and religious divides. Because, as one Western diplomat said, “everything is possible if you have good protection”, Kenya is potentially capable of growing “the full range of illicit plants”. Police destroyed some opium poppy plants as early as 1989. In 1997, as in almost every year, the Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU) destroyed small plots of poppy on the slopes of Mount Kenya, a few kilometers outside Nanyuki. There are also persistent but unconfirmed reports of coca plantations between Kericho and Kisumu. The valleys and slopes of this mountainous tea-growing region (around 2 000 meters) lie on the equator and bear a strange resemblance to the tropical valleys of the Andes.

Kisumu seems to handle most of the water-borne traffic, in both directions, with Jinja, the Ugandan trading port on Lake Victoria which boomed until the early 1970s, when ex-dictator Idi Amin decided to expel nearly 300,000 Asians, some of whom took refuge in Kisumu. Since then, the formal economy has languished but smuggling of arms, cannabis and coffee seems to have taken up the slack.

In the north of the country, two-way smuggling of arms, camels, stolen medical drugs and cannabis across the border with Sudan is controlled by the tribes of Turcana province, and often passes through Ugandan territory. This trafficking, which is often “political” in that southern Sudan is in rebellion against the Islamist government, is very rarely interfered with⁸⁰.

The whole coastal region, and especially Kilifi province, is part of the age-old tradition of the Omani seaborne trading empire. Mombassa receives the full flood of contraband from the Arabian peninsula and Zanzibar. The well-established gold-smuggling networks that made Mombassa a transshipment point

⁸⁰ See the chapter on “Sudan”

throughout the 19th and 20th centuries now also handles drugs, especially heroin and Mandrax. Although some contraband is shipped by *dhow* and there are still a few adventurers who follow in the wake of Henry de Monfreid, most is now moved on freighters and commercial airlines. The fact that Mombassa, in a bid to rival Dar es Salaam and Maputo, has turned itself into a free port has only swelled the flow of illicit goods, without yet enabling it to mount a real challenge to the commercial supremacy of those ports.

Money-Laundering: from Bureaux de Change to Luxury Hotels

The perception that “anything and anyone can be bought” in Kenya has encouraged the development of money-laundering. For several decades, most of the foreign exchange market was in the hands of illegal bureaux. Despite the strong growth of the banking sector over the past ten years (there are dozens of European, Asian and South African banks in the country), and the appearance of a few automatic telling machines, bureaux de change have mushroomed, this time legally. Most are run by the Asian community. Even tourist guides encourage readers to use them, as they offer rates up to 20% better than any bank and will even buy Kenyan and Tanzanian shillings for dollars. Operating in tandem with the bureaux is the *hundi* system of informal international transactions that enable funds to be transferred electronically from the Asia-Pacific region⁸¹. In Kenya, as in Tanzania and Mozambique, some “foreign” investors are in fact Kenyans who use the system as a screen to benefit from several tax breaks.

These mechanisms also make Nairobi an ideal place to invest for money-launderers in the Indian Ocean states and South Africa. As the country has practically no anti-laundering laws, even the banks do not declare suspicious deposits and make no bones about accepting large cash sums on the say-so of Western businessmen.

In the Malindi area, the Italian mafia is said to own several luxury hotels and to use Kenya as a base for its financial operations in Tanzania and Madagascar. The lack of information about the ownership of these hotels⁸² raises questions about why the authorities take such a passive attitude towards them — as they do towards a chain of leisure centers comprising nightclubs, restaurants and casinos owned by South Koreans based in Nairobi and Mombassa. Even though the centers are notorious for distributing large volumes of *bhang*, cocaine and amphetamines – as an OGD special envoy confirmed by visiting them – and the clientele, especially in the nightclubs, is very young, the owners have never been troubled by any official probe.

SUDAN

Whereas Khartoum was the site of Sudan’s largest cannabis seizure ever in June 1998 (over one metric ton), General Majub Saad, head of Sudan’s anti-narcotics brigade, paradoxically told the press that “drugs finance terrorist activities in the south” of the country. “Terrorism” and “drug trafficking” have become diplomatic weapons which Sudan, and its enemies, do not hesitate to brandish. Improved relations between the military-Islamic regime in Khartoum and some European Union countries, in particular France, has resulted in certain English-language publications (such as the *Washington Post* on several occasions in 1997) publishing reports on the involvement of some European banks in money

⁸¹ See the chapter on “The ‘Caribbeanization’ of the Indian Ocean ”

⁸² Ibid.

laundering operations in Sudan. No further details were given. Washington has consistently accused Sudan of becoming an institutional money launderer for Italian and Middle Eastern criminal organizations. Though drug trafficking and money laundering are without a doubt common in Sudan, it is difficult to quantify their scope in a country where financial transparency is not a prime concern. The “political” use of information (and disinformation) makes it even more difficult to get a better understanding of the situation.

Porous Borders for Smugglers

Sudan’s borders with its neighbors are extremely porous, whether in the south with Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; in the west with Chad and Libya; or in the east with Ethiopia. There are many reasons for this lack of control, which allows people to enter and leave Sudan without any real hindrance from authorities: in some areas of the south and southeast, Khartoum exercises little influence; many areas in the north of the country are contested; communications routes in the east and southeast, are vital for a country suffering from international pressure and an economic embargo and must therefore remain open at all cost. The OGD special envoy has discovered that caravans smuggling all kinds of goods cross those very regions controlled by government troops, such as along the borders with Egypt and Chad, in return for the payment of substantial bribes.

Despite the assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1996 and the terrorist attack in Aswan, Egypt, in 1997 (two events in which the hand of Khartoum was visible), the Egyptian government remains obsessed with the division of the waters of the Nile river, and thus the integrity of Sudan. As a result, Egypt preaches leniency towards its southern neighbor, and closes its eyes to trafficking activities originating on its border with Sudan. After Cairo announced in April 1998 the eminent signature of a cooperation agreement on security matters with Khartoum, definitive reconciliation between the two countries collapsed for the time being, with Egypt accusing Sudan of “failing to live up to its promises” on the fight against terrorism and the extradition of Islamists implicated in attacks on Egyptian territory. The meeting of Sudanese opposition figures in Cairo in August 1998 must be interpreted as an effective means for Egyptian authorities of pressuring Khartoum, rather than as a sign that improved relations between the two countries is being reconsidered.

Whatever the reasons given, the consequences remain the same: the border region between the two remains fertile ground for international smuggling activities. Caravans crossing Chad, and frequently originating in Nigeria, must also transit Sudan on their way to Egypt and Red Sea ports. These Sahara routes, for many years the prerogative of still-operational arms traffickers, are now carrying drugs: mainly hashish, but also heroin. And the routes work in both directions: from the Red Sea countries of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia, on their way to Chad, Uganda, and the Central African Republic. These latter three nations act as exporters of heroin and hashish by air to European and South African markets. For instance, three Turkish nationals were arrested in June 1998 in Hurghada (an Egyptian Red Sea port) after 4 tons of hashish were found on their small boat. The drug was purchased in Uganda and had transited through Sudan.

Sudan’s border regions are also crossing points for inter-regional trafficking, as smugglers wish to avoid direct, but better controlled, border crossings. Southern Sudan is systematically traversed by traffickers from the Congo and Uganda heading for Kenya and Ethiopia. Other smugglers coming from Kenya cross Sudan en route for the Democratic Republic of Congo. Between a no-man’s land and politically-protected trafficking, Sudan seems to lie at the crossroads for all smuggling networks. It also allows the perpetuation of traditions from the Mobutu regime in neighboring ex-Zaire, traditions which

were pushed to the extreme regarding Sudan, with the barter of arms, gasoline, diamonds, and cocaine, as well as military advisers and “secret agents.” “Deposed” government officials under Mobutu are now living in Khartoum.

The Diplomatic Stakes of Cannabis

A series of strong-arm operations in regions supposed to be cannabis producers was undertaken by Khartoum military authorities in 1997-1998. The most important operation occurred in the Beja region, on the border with Ethiopia. The previous OGD report⁸³ indicated that the Sudanese government was making an effort to convince international institutions, and in particular the United Nations Drug Control Program, that it is applying an active anti-narcotics policy. Khartoum hopes these organizations will play a counter-balancing role vis-à-vis American pressure. The government also wants to demonstrate that cannabis growing is the fault of the armed opposition fighting the government with, as a final objective, gaining military control of these regions.

The target of the Sudanese government seems to lie beyond its own borders: in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, Kenya, and Uganda. Its efforts aim at showing that the crops and smuggling present in these countries bordering on Sudan benefit exclusively the Sudanese opposition. This appears to be true in at least one case. Along its frontier with Sudan, the Eritrean government offers rear bases to the Beja resistance, supplying them with arms and training. As Eritrea is increasingly becoming a hub for drug trafficking, the Beja tribes are directly involved in this activity. Interpol puts forth a series of factors which have contributed to the development of smuggling in Eritrea. These include a nearly-non existent antidrug legislation, a lack of resources available to authorities, and the traditional presence of numerous qat crops which, under the pressure of international demand, are being converted to cannabis, etc. But the Bejas must today face accusations from Sudanese authorities which put the United States in an uncomfortable position. In this case, at least, American intelligence officials cannot even say that the Bejas have turned to drug trafficking and cannabis cultivation in Eritrea as a matter of survival, because the rebels continue to be financially supported by the former masters of Khartoum, now deposed by the current Islamist regime. The situation is not unique. In the south, the growing and selling of cannabis seems to be the basis of a barter trade with Kenya. Nairobi thus “subsidizes” in this way the Christian rebels. This situation highlights, in Sudan’s words, the US State Department’s double standard: firm support for the Kenyan government, but simultaneous condemnation of Khartoum’s involvement in drug trafficking.

While the Sudanese government might discredit its critics with this argument, it will be increasingly difficult for Khartoum to defend itself against accusations of the role it plays in laundering drug money.

Institutionalized Laundering Techniques

The cost of the civil war in Sudan, estimated at nearly 20% of the nation’s nominal GDP, along with the economic sanctions resulting from it, pose a greater threat to the Islamist regime in Sudan than the military operations of divided guerrilla movements. Inflation is over 80% per year, and public accounts are harmed by capital flight, in particular funds controlled by certain Islamist movements looking for safer investments with higher returns, and who weary of paying increasingly large fees to Khartoum (see below).

⁸³ See WGD (1995-1996), pp. 180-182

Since 1995, dissatisfaction is developing within Sudan's Muslim population itself, leading to demonstrations, particularly in the capital. These have resulted in violence of an insurrectional nature, up to now rapidly suppressed by the authorities. However, organized opposition from the bazaar merchants and middle classes would prove more difficult to contain.

But although the Khartoum regime is unable to profit fully from its oil production due to the civil war, Sudan does not seem to be experiencing any difficulty in meeting payments on its outstanding debt to the IMF. On the one hand Khartoum allows Islamist groups and personalities to operate from Sudanese territory in exchange for payment. On the other hand the government collects a "tax" on each suspicious transaction, including drug money laundering, which finances in particular arms purchases. In this way, money laundering in Sudan takes the form of documentary credits or government guarantees for the purchase, real or imagined, of illegal products (such as narcotics) or embargoed goods (such as arms).

Sudan's difficulties in unloading certain of its industrial production on the international market (as buyers prefer to look elsewhere in order to avoid antagonizing Washington) has led Khartoum to look to independent traders. These traders, Italians (according to Interpol), Mauritians, or nationals of the Arabian Peninsula states, barter funds they want laundered, usually from heroin trafficking, in exchange for Sudanese goods which they are able to sell on the international market. In 1996, almost all of Sudan's cotton crop was sold in this way. The pill seems hard for the US State Department to swallow. It is already familiar with this form of "mixed trading" from experience with Burma, Panama, and Afghanistan. Some of the US's enemies, such as Ussama ben Laden (who benefited from this practice in Sudan prior to his "distancing"), used this type of trade for the first time in the late 1980s in Afghanistan with the support of the CIA and American funds. The situation is all the more delicate in that Saudi Arabia, beyond reproach in the eyes of Washington, appears at times to act as a link in some of these laundering operations.

EGYPT

Political, diplomatic, and economic imperatives, more than concern over the ravages of trafficking, lead to the establishment of Egypt's Anti-Narcotics General Administration (ANGA). This organization has been assigned three main tasks: the eradication of cannabis and poppy crops in the Sinai and Middle Egypt, patrolling the Libyan border, and patrolling Cairo's international airport. This effort is in response to international pressure, in particular from the United States DEA. Nevertheless it is out of the question for the Egyptian government that antidrug activities hinder two very important elements in the country's development, even if these elements in fact encourage trafficking networks. These are the tourist industry and foreign capital, coming traditionally from the Arabian Peninsula. The tourist industry has been affected deeply by the September 1997 terrorist attacks in Egypt. As a result, the government has made the fight against religious fundamentalism its highest priority, in the belief that its success will render the tourist industry viable again. It is within this framework of national interest that the ANGA was set up.

Mixed Results

The results of the ANGA effort are so far mixed, given the extent of smuggling activities. General Mohammad Shaarawi, the head of ANGA, announced in June 1998 that total seizures in 1996 amounted to 7 metric tons of marijuana (*bango*), 2 tons of hashish, 50 kilograms of heroin, and 420,000 tablets of

synthetic drugs. Given that the number of arrests for drug trafficking in Egypt rose to over 18,000 that same year, the conclusion is that law enforcement efforts were aimed essentially at small- and medium-sized smugglers. Since 1996, some US \$2.5 million have been confiscated and over \$200,000 in additional funds frozen as part of criminal proceedings against presumed drug traffickers.

These results are only mediocre, especially when compared to the statistics published in a study by Hamdi Abdel Azim, professor of economics at the Institute of Management's Research Center, part of the private Sadat University. Abdel Azim estimates that transactions in Egypt involving mainly laundered drug money total \$3.5 billion. This situation is explained by the Egyptian government's political objectives, which tend to favor the development of drug trafficking and its redeployment.

Indeed, ANGA's actions are submitted to three kinds of pressure: from international antidrug institutions and the DEA; from the national authorities wishing to use all available means in a merciless war against Islamist movements and, in particular, the Muslim Brotherhood; and finally, there is the pressure resulting from the willingness to promote the economic development of the Sinai peninsula, which is increasingly looking like a new Eldorado. Developing the Sinai is all the more a priority because the region may hold oil and could reduce Egypt's historic dependence on the Arabic peninsula. But until oil wells actually rise up there, the government in Cairo will do nothing that might hurt its relations with the Emirates, tourism and the activities of the Suez canal. Nevertheless, the Sinai area is beginning to play an important role in the mechanism set up by traffickers, particularly as a producer of poppies (General Shaarawi himself says "three billion poppy plants" were destroyed in 1996) and cannabis (230 million plants destroyed).

Supporting Anti-terrorist Operations

ANGA, which in principle is an antidrug institution, appears in reality both as an intelligence body and a corps of irregulars at the service of the war waged by the Egyptian military against Islamic fundamentalists. The diversion of the duties of Egypt's drug fighting institution fits into the government's strategy toward its foreign allies and domestic Islamic fundamentalist opposition. The Egyptian authorities, which cannot afford to stop discussions with the United States and the European Union, are forever offering their services to bring the Middle East peace process to fruition. Any deterioration of the situation between Israel and its neighbors would be bad news in Cairo. Tourist flows and international aid would dry up and the Arab League, which has just moved back to its Cairo premises after abandoning them following the Camp David agreement, could turn its back on Egypt and newly isolate it from the rest of the Arab world. The US Department of State, which is well aware of what is at stake, has no problem ignoring Egyptian anti-Israeli rhetoric provided it comes with a fierce repression of the Moslem Brotherhood fundamentalists.

This is where ANGA comes in. Its law enforcement activities invariably take place along the river Nile in an area stretching north to south from Al Minya to Luxor (Al Uqsar), Egypt's capital of tourism. The myth of the existence of cannabis and poppy fields in this region, which the DEA continues to support, serves as an excuse for the meticulous combing of every plot of land located in an area stretching, at the most, over a few acres on either side of the Nile. By exasperating the farmers, this ANGA presence aims to push them to blame the fundamentalists for the constant law enforcement operations. This, however, does not appear to present an insurmountable obstacle to terrorist actions, as demonstrated by the surprise attack by the Islamist commando group in Luxor.

It is also a politically-correct excuse, at least in the eyes of international antidrug organizations, for the military occupation of the region. However, the reduced size of arable plots and the meddlesome checks they are submitted to suggest that such a cat-and-mouse game can only take place while some illicit crops are tolerated. A similar situation exists along the border with Libya, where a unit of 25 soldiers headed by a colonel criss-crosses the desert supposedly in search of poppy plantations. This apparently pleases the DEA. At the same time, close cooperation has been established between the Egyptian and Libyan authorities. It will soon mean the exchange of liaison officers — a development the State Department does not like so much.

The Tourist is King

If the State Department's annual report and Interpol files highlight the real or potential significance of drug trafficking in Egypt, they only give very few figures (except some relating to crop eradication) on the domestic narcotics market, which these two organizations nevertheless estimate at \$4 billion annually. Indeed, while Middle-Egypt is systematically combed out by the military, the means of transportation going through it, and especially the famous "first class" carriages of the train linking Cairo to the scenic south enjoyed by tourists (Luxor and Aswan), are not checked. The soldiers posted in every carriage cannot cause the slightest inconvenience to the all-powerful tourist they are supposed to protect from terrorists. Even in the Abu Simbel area, at a stone's throw from the border with Sudan, drug law enforcement does not appear to be the priority of ANGA. Of course, the river boat service linking Egypt to the town of Wadi Halfa, Sudan, has stopped running due to the political tension between the two countries. But the OGD envoy who crossed that border twice using caravan routes, along which he encountered mostly camels destined for Cairo's slaughterhouses, occasionally came across tired tourists and *Coca-Cola* sellers.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find cannabis in the tourist resorts or on the boats cruising down the Nile, and cocaine in Cairo's exclusive hotels, especially their casinos. Of course, the consumers — tourists and businessmen from the West and the countries of the Persian Gulf — are not to be bothered by the law. Two years ago an interior minister clumsily declared that the fundamentalist peril had been eradicated and that tourists were safe. In response, the fundamentalists carried out two attacks against tourist buses and hotels. Since, the protection of the tourists has become a synonym for public order — and the tourists the main target of the terrorists, as was confirmed once more by the bloody attack against a tourist bus in Cairo on September 18, 1997. Being a tourist, or a businessman from the Gulf, has become an ideal cover for drug traffickers.

"Tourist-traffickers" link the Arabic peninsula (mainly the networks originating in Dubai), the Schengen area (especially Britain, the Netherlands and Italy) and, recently, South Africa. Drugs sent from South Africa often make a stopover in Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania, Nairobi, Kenya and Khartoum, Sudan. The traffickers, with the complicity of airport baggage handlers and the policemen supposed to watch them, often operate after the passengers' luggage has been checked in. The OGD envoy could observe that small amounts of drugs (especially cocaine) are concealed in suitcases during the stopover. When the plane reaches its destination, counterparts pick them up before they are checked by customs (that is after suitcases are unloaded off the plane and before they go on the conveyor belt). The connection works both ways, as heroin is also smuggled into South Africa from Egypt and Tanzania. Alongside Dar es-Salaam, it seems that the airport most affected by this traffic involving unaware "mules" is that of Nairobi.

The main advantage of this system is that it makes for frequent shipments of small quantities of drugs. Thus, in the three African countries mentioned above a few seizures have been carried out, including one in Tanzania involving 4 kg. Scores of Egyptian nationals traveling from their country were arrested for heroin trafficking in Europe during 1996 and the first half of 1997: in Italy (1.2 kg in two hauls); in Greece (four seizures totalling 6 kg); in Switzerland (several small hauls reaching nearly 3 kg); and in Austria (2 kg seized from a trafficking trio made up of an Egyptian, a Sudanese and a Lebanese national). Other traffickers have copied this method and seem to be running a similar scam using the train linking Cairo to Aswan. They send drugs by rail in packets addressed to hotel employees and tour operators. In the Sinai region, the worst-affected area is probably that around Wadi Pharaoh in the south of the peninsula. Poppy crops have been identified there on several occasions. The Sinai, which is undergoing an economic boom while being located on tourist routes, has the same problems as the Luxor-Aswan axis. All the more so because the kind of tourism practised along the Red Sea and in the Gulf of Aqaba is very specific, being based on “adventure” (safaris in 4X4 vehicles, scuba diving, yachting) which makes it hardly compatible with police checks. ANGA’s operations in the region are sporadic and essentially targeted at illicit crops, especially poppy. However, the drug traffic aimed at the exclusive hotels of both Egypt, Israel (Elat) and Jordan (Aqaba) is only rarely affected by law enforcement.

Consumer Trends

While the major networks involved in transit trafficking continue operating with impunity, since their drugs are catering for a “protected” clientele, the fight against small producers and users, who make up the vast majority of those arrested on drug charges, has entailed a major transformation of consumption. In the streets and bazaars of Cairo, it is increasingly rare to come across the characteristic whiff of hashish burning in a hookah (called *chicha* in Egypt). Nowadays, the drugs in vogue are diverted medicines and synthetic drugs — above all synthetic opiates. Synthetic drugs were introduced into Egypt during the building of the Aswan dam. It started with amphetamines (*Maxiton*), which very often were manufactured locally and very much sought after by the dam’s labor force. In today’s Egypt *Maxiton* is used alongside pain-killers, antidepressants and even mood elevators, all of which are available over the counter. The market is so promising that exports of pharmaceuticals from neighboring countries, such as Lebanon, the Emirates, etc., to Egypt are experiencing a boom, while underground networks fuel the Cairo market with synthetic drugs from Greece and Bulgaria. Thus, as in other Moslem African countries where alcohol is banned, drug abuse affects different sectors of the population in different ways. By and large, there are two markets in Egypt. “Traditional” hard drugs like heroin and cocaine are especially prevalent in well-off circles — scholars, senior civil servants, bazaar traders, etc. — who are in permanent contact with the foreigners visiting Egypt on business and vacation. Mainly because of law enforcement, poor segments of the population turn to “medical drug addiction” on synthetic drugs. Paradoxically, cannabis, which has been used for centuries in Egypt, is viewed as the drug whose use is the most dangerous. In response to law enforcement efforts aimed mainly at cannabis, the growing of this plant for purely personal use is increasing. The trained eye can see numerous examples of cannabis plants grown on the balconies of Cairo apartments, despite the risks involved.

THE COMOROS

International attention has been drawn to the Comoros archipelago since the end of August 1997 because of the island of Anjouan's resolve to leave the federation and join Mayotte as a dependency of France. One year later, despite numerous good-will missions, not only does the problem remain unresolved, but internecine conflicts have deepened among the secessionists themselves. It is significant that the Comoros government has used the argument of the fight against crime and drugs as a pretext for its military intervention on the rebellious island. If the argument is to stick, the drug problem must be seen to have reached critical proportions, which is indeed the case in the Comoros, although not only on Anjouan but throughout the archipelago. Small-scale growing of cannabis and other narcotic plants, as well as the consumption of diverted medications, are the primary concern. The high use of marijuana is also supplied from neighboring islands, in particular Madagascar, and from the African continent. But the Comoros' geographical situation at the entrance to the Mozambique Strait makes the country a transit zone for all illegal goods. Added to this are the effects of narco-tourism to the region and corruption, which can reach very high levels in the administration.

Drugs: Geopolitical Tool

On September 3, 1997, a spokesman for President Mohammad Taki Abdulkarim tried to justify the landing of 300 soldiers on the rebel island — an operation which turned into a fiasco. He said the intervention had been spurred by the “worsening situation” in Anjouan, and in particular “abuse of drugs and alcohol, theft and rape, destruction of state property and flouting of civil liberties”. A statement by the foreign minister read out on national radio from Moroni, capital of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, added that the rebels, who routed the government invasion, were under the influence of “narcotic substances”.

It is not the first time that the fight against drugs and crime has been used as a pretext for military intervention: the Americans made the same claim in Panama and the Russians in Chechnya. The Comoros' strategic position at the head of the Mozambique Channel, which separates Madagascar from continental Africa, means that the islands — first Anjouan, then Grande Comore — lie on the route of freighters and oil tankers coming and going between the Persian Gulf and Europe or America. Moreover, the United States and France are the main destinations for Comorian exports. A recent report by the territorial operations leader of the Joint Anti-drug Squad (BRIMAD), which is made up of about 20 police, gendarmes and customs officers, states that this route is used by drugs in transit through countries that are important trafficking centers in the region, such as South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique — sometimes in both directions. The report also points out that the Comoros' location in a region where tourism is an important part of the economy, along with Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles, keeps the networks particularly busy.

Tourism and Immigration

Six airlines have flights from the Comoros to South Africa, Europe and the Arab countries several times a week. In addition to the port of Musamudu on Anjouan, the port of Moroni and the Prince Said Ibrahim d'Hahaya international airport on Grande Comore, the large number of small harbors on each island, the wide variety of sea and river transport (dhows, sailboats, fishing boats and merchant ships) and the opening of new international airports are providing the networks with greater choice than ever.

As well as trade routes, drug traffickers also use migration movements: from Anjouan to Grande Comore and the French island of Mayotte; and from the Comoros to France (where several Comorans are being held for drug trafficking), Madagascar, southern Africa and, more recently, the countries of the Arabian peninsula. It is estimated that some 200,000 Comorians live outside the islands.

Drug use throughout the archipelago is strongly linked to rising unemployment (27% of working-age men are out of a job). Users are supplied not only by the spin-offs of international trafficking, but also by regional networks working out of Madagascar and Mauritius, and by local marijuana (*bangué*) grown on all three islands (Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli). At the time of the troubles in Anjouan, several drug scandals came to light in Moroni, the capital of the Comoros federation. On August 31 the headmaster of a private primary school who had bought ten 30-kilogram bags of marijuana for a total of 750,000 Comoran francs (US \$1700) was arrested by the drug squad. The drug, masquerading as vanilla from Madagascar, had been unloaded on a beach.

Around the same time the BRIMAD, with the help of Moroni detectives, raided the capital's prison and arrested the senior guard in possession of several kilograms of marijuana, which he had received from the crew of the *Samson*, a Malagasy boat. The prison network supplied not only inmates but also the neighborhoods of Mbouéni, Irougoudjani and in particular Caltex, which is an especially "sensitive" part of the capital.

The local market is also supplied with cannabis derivatives such as African marijuana and Pakistani-Afghan hashish from eastern Africa (Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique) and the Indian Ocean (Réunion and Mauritius), large quantities of which are in transit. In 1997, a young Comoran was arrested out at sea as he was transferring his wares from Zanzibar onto a dugout canoe to take them to the coast. On the Comoran market, a kilogram of marijuana bought for about \$20 in Tanzania or Madagascar is sold for \$65 wholesale and brings in \$220 at street prices. A "banana" (50 grams) can cost up to \$16 when the drug is in short supply, while a joint sells for \$2 to \$3. The fact that marijuana is being imported suggests that domestic consumption is expanding, as traditional local crops are no longer able to meet demand.

Small-Scale Production and Consumption

According to a UNDCP report published in 1995, cannabis growing is spread across several hundred hectares all over the islands. Cultivation has tended to expand because of a fall in the price of cloves on the international market and the popularity of synthetic alternatives to vanilla, of which the Comoros is the second-biggest producer worldwide. Local people also look after wild cannabis plants, weeding them and so on. When demand exceeds supply, the growers dry the fresh grass by placing it on a piece of corrugated iron heated from below by a gentle flame. Several hundreds of kilograms of derivatives, mainly marijuana from various sources, are seized every year.

An increase in the use of qat has also been observed, particularly among people of Arab descent in Moroni. The police do nothing to stop this, even though it is illegal. Children and teenagers use datura and other plants that grow wild, as well as various solvents such as mosquito repellent mixed with tobacco. Trafficking of psychotropic substances takes place from the island of Anjouan towards Mayotte and Moroni. Certain sources say that some of these drugs are manufactured on the spot by a French chemist who returned to Anjouan after being expelled by former president Abdallah. The rest of the drugs in circulation such as amphetamines, barbiturates, medical drugs, opiates, etc. – which also have legal uses – and Mandrax come from South Africa, Tanzania and Mayotte. They are becoming

increasingly popular and are leading to multiple forms of addiction, along with cannabis, alcohol and psychotropic substances.

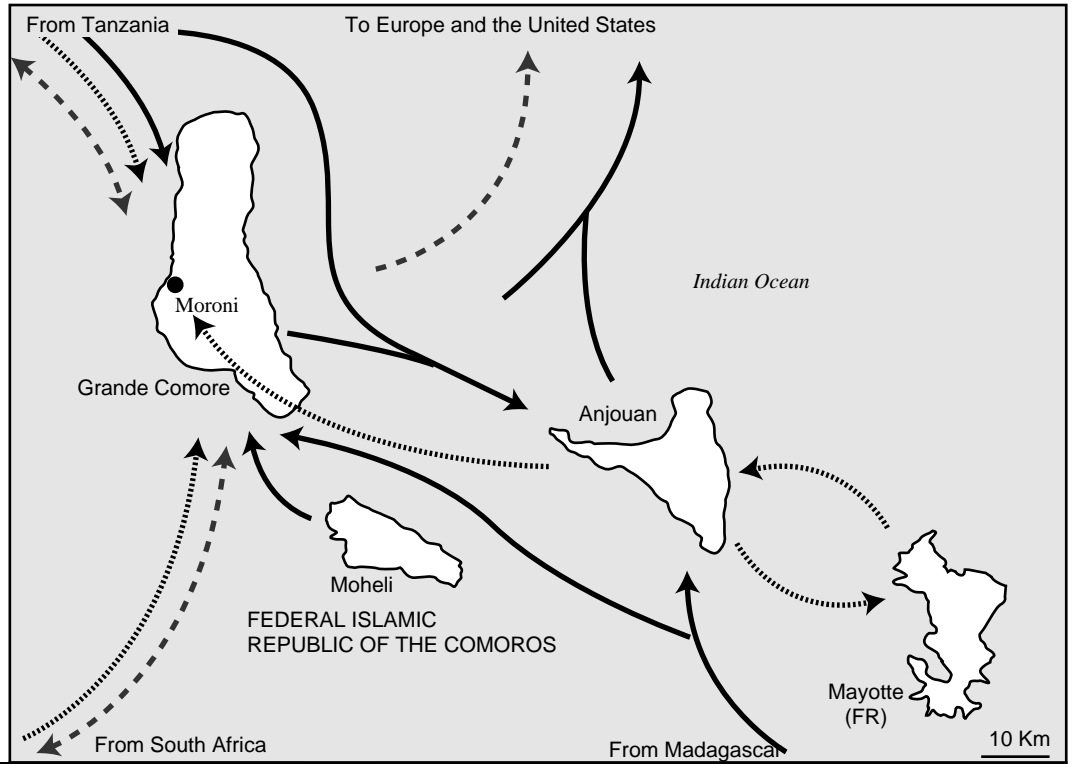
On July 25, 1998, the Ministry of Health brought together employees from its various departments to consider ways to combat parallel trading in medications which target both sick people and drug users. The director of BRIMAD, Mr. Elhad, noted the presence of two trafficking networks originating from mainland Tanzania and from the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar. He brought attention to a probable secret manufacturing center on Anjouan, under the control of a South African network. These illegal medications are unloaded on and consumed in the Volovolo market and in the hospitals of Moroni, Mitsamiouli, and Foubouni.

Narco-Tourism and Corruption

Local consumption of heroin and cocaine is restricted at the moment to tourists and Comorians who have lived abroad. It is particularly widespread on Nosy-Bé, a Malagasy island between Madagascar and Grande Comore, among the large, mostly Italian, foreign community. Cocaine has also made an appearance at the Galawa hotel complex, 30 kilometers from Moroni. Abuse and illegal dealing are made easier because tourists, most of them from South Africa and Germany, are not subject to any checks.

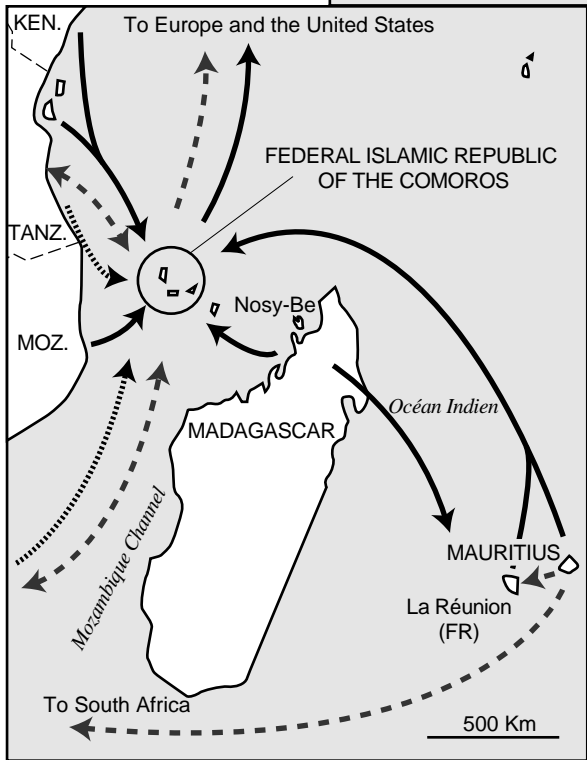
The BRIMAD has identified several relatively well-organized networks that enable drugs aimed at the European market to pass through Grande Comore: a South African network dealing in Asian heroin, a network for South American cocaine working out of South Africa and Tanzania, and a network of Pakistani-Afghan hashish operating from Tanzania. According to the BRIMAD, the members of these networks are Tanzanians, Malagasies, Algerians and South Africans who use Mauritians and French people living in the Comoros as go-betweens. They “buy” the complicity of some freight, customs and chamber of trade officials. Legal investigations into breaches of drug legislation have been started but to date no convictions have been made. Nor have there been any seizures of heroin or cocaine, even though the police have learned from their informers in Tanzania that people who have swallowed capsules of drugs travel through the Comoros regularly and that bloodstained syringes are found on the beaches.

The drug squad also knows that free handouts of heroin and cocaine are made in the village of Miysamihouli, where there is a big hotel, with the aim of getting customers hooked. The head of the BRIMAD blames the ineffectiveness of its efforts to curb drug trafficking on staff shortages (he only has about 20 men), a lack of efficient means of communication and of money to pay informers. He said three of his officers about to make arrests in trafficking circles had recently been set upon and assaulted, but no legal action had been taken against the attackers. However, the BRIMAD believes that between 8 kg and 15 kg of hard drugs pass through Moroni every month.

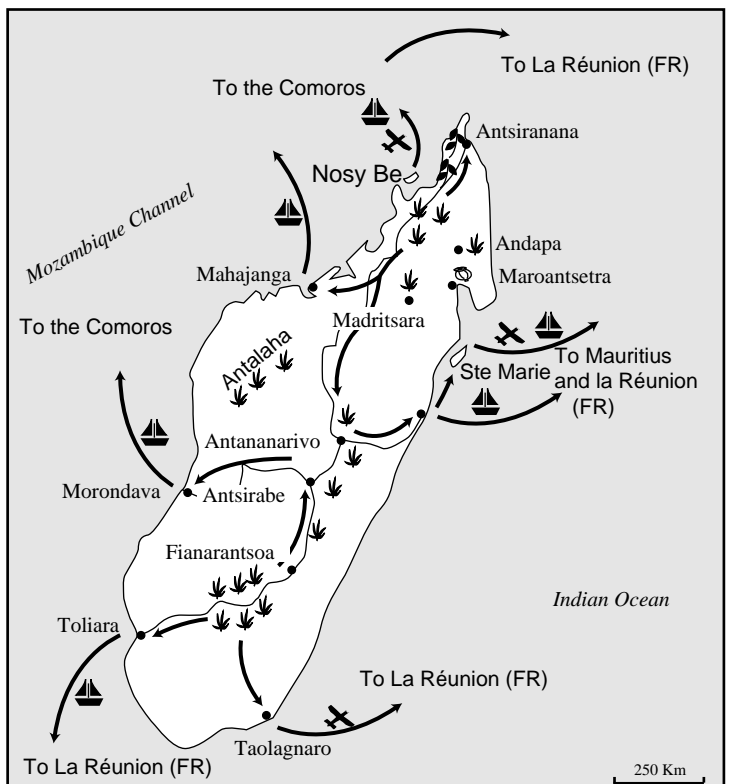


→ Trafficking in hashish and marijuana
 - - - → Trafficking in cocaine and heroin
 → Trafficking in medications

Map 11-b: Comoros: Confetti of the drug trade



Map 11-a: Islands of the Indian Ocean



🌿 Cannabis production area
 🐾 Qat production area
 👑 Supposed poppy production area
 → Cannabis trafficking by road and on foot
 ⚓ Cannabis trafficking by sea
 ✈ Cannabis trafficking by air

Map 11-c: Illicit crops and trafficking routes in Madagascar

Protection can come from very high levels. Following the seizure of a suitcase containing 10 kg kilograms of marijuana by the BRIMAD drug squad, in early 1998, the person arrested on arrival from Mombassa, Kenya, reportedly quoted the country's paymaster as being behind the operation. The case is being investigated by the Moroni prosecutor's department. The paymaster was released after being questioned by the examining magistrate. In Moroni, rumor has it that the publication of the article uncovering the affair in the pro-government newspaper *Al-Watwan* resulted in the dismissal of the editor-in-chief. He has been accused of daring to publish a report making allegations against an important government figure, especially one who is close to the President.

MADAGASCAR

Cannabis cultivation and consumption are traditional activities in Madagascar. But the island is now becoming an area of large-scale production and an export hub for this drug. Regional smuggling is rising dramatically, as pointed out by the protests in particular of antidrug authorities in the Comoros, Mauritius, and Réunion Islands, the destination of much of Madagascar's cannabis production. This phenomenon indicates that organized networks have been set up to produce and collect the drug as well as sell it, on both domestic and export markets. This activity enjoys complicity at the highest levels of government. The development of international tourism in Madagascar has brought with it the appearance of cocaine. Use of this drug is beginning to spread to some sectors of the local community. Foreign investment, whether European or from Pacific countries, is suspected of being used to launder ill-gotten funds.

The Cannabis Industry Boom

In Antananarivo, the country's capital, public opinion, tired of rampant corruption caused by the closeness of the authorities to traffickers in precious stones, protected animals and plants, and vanilla, greeted with loud cheers, in 1997, the confirmation of a three-year prison sentence against the wife of former prime minister Francisque Ravony. Traveling on a diplomatic passport, the woman, who is also the daughter of former president (1960-1972) Philibert Tsiranana, known as the "Father of Independence", was arrested at Mayotte airport early this year in possession of 5 kilograms of *zamal*, the Comoran name for cannabis. By punishing her with a prison sentence, the French court in Mayotte has shown its determination to combat the importing of cannabis from Madagascar.

Until 1996, the Malagasy Central Drugs Department (SCS) estimated that annual production of *rongony*, as marijuana is known in Madagascar, was somewhere between 10 and 20 metric tons. This very rough estimate is based on three main factors: a boom in internal consumption since the end of the 1980s, connected with increasing poverty since the 1979 recession; better knowledge of where the drug is grown (see map) and the (chiefly sea) routes it subsequently takes both within and outside the country (toward the capital and the ports); and the fact that three tons of *rongony* were seized in 1996.

The SCS said marijuana trafficking had never been managed by criminal organizations previously, but by a host of isolated individuals according to a survival strategy. This type of trafficking usually follows the same pattern: a group of three or four people walk across the bush for several days and when they arrive at the place of production, each buys three 20-kg bags of *rongony*. The price per bag is about US \$30 — the equivalent of a month's minimum wage in Madagascar. They carry the bags on their backs until they reach a city. Trucks hide the drug in a consignment of other goods and take it to major

cities such as Antananarivo and Fianarantsoa. In Antananarivo they can sell each bag for more than a million Malagasy francs (about \$200).

Some of it goes to the many small dealers who supply the city markets with “bombs”: packets of about 20 grams sold for about US \$0.85 each; the rest goes on to the ports of Toamasina, in the east, Tulear, in the south-west, Mahajanga, in the west, and Antsiranana, in the north, before being exported to target countries (the SCS believes these are the Comoros, Réunion and Mauritius). The lack of proper roads, and police and army roadblocks on the way out of the cities, has resulted in the truck drivers using two types of strategy: paying an “informal tax” to officials (usually applied to all truck and bush taxi drivers) or sending someone ahead to check out the roadblocks. The latter enables them to hide the goods in several vehicles which go through the roadblocks together to get to their final destination more quickly. These methods of getting past the police are easy to organize because they are based on actual or symbolic family ties: these are extremely important in Madagascar, where you can soon become a “cousin” because of services rendered.

This family network seems to provide a firm basis for trafficking in *rongony*, enabling networks to be set up not just all over Madagascar, but also in countries to which inhabitants emigrate (other Indian Ocean island nations, Europe – mainly France – and southern Africa). Moreover, the department stresses the scale of illegal exports to the Comoros, in addition to the legal exporting of vanilla there from the port of Mahajanga. The operations are made easier by the fact that the customs department is short of both staff and resources, with checks on boats leaving this major port being practically non-existent, according to various witnesses, as well as by intense trading by boats that can carry several dozen tons of cargo. The lack of controls out at sea makes it easier to transfer illegal goods from the cargo boats to larger merchant ships sailing to Africa or Asia, and speedboats are used to get to the Comoros or cross the Mozambique Channel. Although the “family” element is essential in managing trafficking, it does not explain the apparently considerable boom in cultivation of marijuana.

The central drugs department has pointed to three main growing areas: in the south, east of Tulear; in the centre, between Antananarivo and Fianarantsoa; and in the north, in the Tsaratanana hills and Ambre Mountain. A commando raid carried out by two police detachments in the Tsaratanana hills in June 1997 suggests that cannabis growing has become a form of agribusiness: after a 12-hectare field was discovered (with 2122 kg of *rongony* seized), police found another field of 37 ha and 405,675 plants, and carried out a record seizure of 83,242 kg. Adding in another 1257 kg found in the area, this makes a total of about 88 tons of cannabis discovered in that region alone. The scale of the figures indicates that the 106 people arrested were probably organized around a criminal-type network.

The Malagasy authorities seized 19 sacks of marijuana containing 170 kg of the drug in January 1998. It came from Ambanja, in the north-east of the country, and was due to be exported to the Comoros. 105 kg were seized by the drug squad in Mhitsy, a town 30 kilometers from the capital. The drug came from the center-west part of the island and had been transported by truck, concealed among other goods. These examples have led SCS officials to raise their estimates for national production, given today as 1000 metric tons. In April 1998, the island’s northeast region was the target of “CANN 98”, a widespread operation aimed at eliminating cannabis crops. CANN 98 was carried out by the Gendarmerie and the civilian population of the SAVA region, the acronym used for the northeast, vanilla-producing areas of Sambava, Andapa, Vohémar, and Antalaha. Two weeks of combing the forest and mountains of SAVA resulted in the discovery of a 6.5-hectare plot of cannabis farmed by a lone tenant, as well as the seizure of more than 2 tons of marijuana and seeds. Thirteen people were arrested and handed over to the authorities.

A New Eldorado for Drugs and Money Laundering

Cannabis is not Madagascar's only problem drug: cultivation and use of qat is spreading among Moslems in the north. But it is cocaine that is causing the most concern to the director of the Interministerial Committee to Coordinate the Struggle against Drugs, which was set up in 1992 but only became operational in September 1997. His main fear is that consumption will spread to the whole of the country.

Cocaine, which was initially restricted to European tourists staying on the island of Nosy Be, later made an appearance in discotheques in the capital, costing between \$65 and \$100 per gram. Its use is apparently linked to the development of "sex tourism", which is spreading all over the island. As well as the prostitution networks run by Malagasies, mainly in Antananarivo, Italians are suspected of trying to set up others, particularly in the north. The emergence of a market for new drugs may lead to growers experimenting with illegal crops, such as coca and opium poppies, which it may be possible to cultivate in a geographical location such as Madagascar. According to various accounts, some poppies have been planted in the Maroantsetra region, in the north-east of the island.

Similarly, there are strong suspicions concerning the money-laundering operations that foreigners, mainly Italians, are carrying out in Madagascar. Although they are obliged to have some connections with Malagasies – who find this a perfect way to earn money quickly – many property deals involving the tourist industry (on the island of Nosy Be to the northwest, and the island of Sainte-Marie to the northeast) are handled by Italians. As President Didier Ratsiraka's government is privatizing leading companies in the hope of increasing eco-tourism (natural reserves with protected species), it is hard to stop "dirty money" being invested. Present and future profit-taking is the ideal cover for money-laundering, because banking secrecy is still the norm in Madagascar. There is also suspicion about Malaysian investments, which are growing even though the two countries do not yet have official diplomatic relations. In particular, Malaysians own 60% of the capital in the Malagasy lottery, and have plans for a 500-room luxury hotel. A Malaysian bank suspected of involvement in money-laundering in other parts of the world is about to open a branch in the capital.

A new antidrug law, put forward by the Interministerial Committee, contains two important clauses: introduction of a penalty of hard labor for life for drug traffickers (the current law provides for a prison sentence of from six months to two years), and the possibility of abolishing banking secrecy if this is necessary for the conducting of an investigation. Nonetheless, the Committee director has said that the will to combat trafficking was being hampered by a severe lack of financial and technical resources. Moreover, coordination between the various government departments involved becomes bogged down in bureaucracy when rapid and efficient inquiries need to be made.

SENEGAL

Senegal enjoys a certain number of geopolitical, economic, and human advantages in Africa. Its geographical position puts it at a crossroads of international sea lanes (Latin American, African, North African, and European), road and railroad routes through the Sahel region, and airline links from numerous regions around the world. Furthermore, Dakar, the former capital of French West Africa, has inherited the basic infrastructure and industrial base on which to build sustainable development. The relatively stable and democratic population is led by a well-educated elite. There is no violent antagonism between either the majority Muslim population (85% of the total) and the Christian minority,

or between the predominant Wolof ethnic group (45% of the total) and the other ethnic groups. The Casamance problem, which has an undeniable effect on cannabis production and marijuana trafficking, is above all a question of regional irredentism provoked by the geographical separation of the province from the rest of Senegal, and by the area's economic backwardness compared to the rest of the country.

However some of Senegal's "advantages" can also represent vulnerabilities for the country concerning the narcotics trade. This is most obvious in the case of its geographical location and its role as a hub for human travel and commercial trade. A "well-educated elite" can also be very effective in grey market or illegal activities, using to its advantage the presence of a large Senegalese immigrant community in developed countries such as France, the United States, Italy, and Spain. This is all the more true in that Senegal is currently suffering an economic crisis. Senegal's proximity to Gambia, a center for smuggling activities wedged into Senegal's southern territory, and to Guinea Bissau, a haven and also a center for drug and arms trafficking for the Casamance rebels, is another handicap for Senegal. With legislative elections taking place in 1998, anti-narcotics authorities were unable to concentrate fully on their normal operations and were diverted for several months to assist with maintaining order and campaigning in favor of the ruling party. There are thus no reliable narcotics statistics for the period 1997-1998 in Senegal. As a result it is not possible to evaluate the amount of drugs passing through Senegal.

Agricultural Crisis and Illegal Production

Agriculture, a sector employing 60% of the active population, has experienced great difficulties. Agriculture's contribution to GDP was 18.75% between 1960 and 1966 but only 2.7% between 1981 and 1991, that is at a level under population growth. Rural migration movements to urban centers have accelerated and the food deficit has got worse because of rapid population growth and urbanisation. Explanations for these adverse conditions include climatic deterioration (dwindling rainfalls and therefore decreasing soil fertility); inadequacy of agricultural policy (as far as rural credit, taxes and land ownership are concerned); poor competitiveness; and a drop in the price of cash crops such as cotton and groundnuts on world markets between 1985 and 1993. The measures adopted under the Agricultural Sectoral Adjustment Program (PASA) did not lead to renewed growth.

Peanut production, which used to be the fuel of development in Senegal, has also dropped sharply from 800,000 metric tons in the 1960s to between 300,000 to 500,000 tons nowadays. The drop in rainfalls led to a reduction of the total land surface grown in peanuts in the worst affected areas, while yields were sharply reduced in other regions. Cannabis, a crop that is far less demanding in terms of both land fertility and rainfall came as an alternative source of income. Cannabis is paid an average of CFA200,000 per kilogram to the grower, that is 50 to 100 times more than licit crops. This explains why cannabis cultivation has developed in most of Senegal⁸⁴. In Casamance, the largest cannabis producer in Senegal, the expansion of cannabis production can be blamed largely on the armed conflict prevailing in the region since 1982⁸⁵.

The second-largest cannabis producing area is about 50 kilometers wide; it stretches along the Gambia's northern border up to the Karone River islands and makes up the south-west of the peanut-producing area. There, illicit crops are a consequence of both the crisis of the peanut agri-business and the bureaucratic slowness of the institutions dealing with farmers. Cannabis plantations are sponsored by Ghanaian traffickers, who can operate with impunity across the border in the Gambia, and who

⁸⁴ GWD (1995-1996) illustrates the different crops areas., pp. 177-178.

⁸⁵ Idem for the relationships between this conflict and cannabis crops, pp. 179-180.

cunningly take advantage of the hardship befalling Senegalese farmers. The drop in the real-terms value of peanuts led to a 40% fall in the purchasing power of farmers. When peanut farmers deliver their crop to SONACOS, the state company marketing oilseeds, the firm deducts the price of inputs and seeds which farmers were supplied with by its sister company SONAGRAINE. Then, SONACOS issues the farmers with a receipt against which they will be paid a few weeks, or a few months, later. In the meantime, farmers often have to incur exceptional expenses for traditional events like weddings, baptisms or the ritual ceremony of “sacred woods”. Then moneylenders come in and offer to buy farmers’ receipts for half or two-thirds of their face value. By contrast, if a farmer agrees to grow cannabis for a Ghanaian boss, the latter will make advance payments and charge no interests. All a farmer has to do to get the rest of his money is deliver his marijuana harvest across the Gambian border. The system is so well-oiled that English-speaking traffickers have set up veritable cannabis growing co-operatives throughout the area, thereby providing an alternative to peanut production. The cannabis produced in the area is shipped to Dakar for the local consumer market, or exported abroad through the port together with large quantities of marijuana grown in the Gambia. The transportation of both Senegalese and Gambian marijuana is handled by Senegalese nationals, who can be farmers concealing drugs among sacks of licit produce (often peanuts for food).

The deterioration of the conflict during 1997, notably with the indiscriminate laying of anti-personnel mines from all sides has had consequences on cannabis production in other areas of Senegal, especially in the Niayes. After the mines made numerous victims, many traders refused to drive to Dakar and either used the “Joola” or pirogues following the coast instead. This caused a shortage of marijuana on the Dakar market and the production of the Niayes soon filled the gap.

The Deteriorating Urban Job Market and Narcotics Trafficking

Senegal ranks 118th in UNDP’s classification of 175 countries according to national wealth, but it ranks 144th on the Human Development Index list. These facts stress a growing disparity in the distribution of national wealth. Some 60% of the current population is under 20 years of age, while 15 to 35 year-olds make up about half the total population of Senegal. Some 100,000 young people enter the job market every year, including approximately 40,000 in urban areas. But the modern sector of the economy, including the public sector, generates less than 5,000 jobs a year. The structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) implemented since 1986 have led to significant job shedding in the public sector and to the closing of facilities. Some 300,000 people, or 30% of the active population, were unemployed in Dakar in 1991. Some of the people who became unemployed have switched to licit activity in the informal sector while others have engaged in illicit activity.

The civil servants who lost their jobs (“the deflated”, as they are known in Senegal) were given an allowance supposed to help them set up self-supporting businesses. Although there is no statistics on this subject, the Ministry of the Economy admits that most failed to create a job for themselves. Firstly, the “deflated” did not receive any training in management. Secondly, because the family demanded that the money be immediately redistributed among family members. Some have migrated abroad while others converted to Muridism (see below). Others have become involved in all kinds of trafficking cashing in on the contacts they had kept in the public sector. Trafficking opportunities include: fraudulent import of cars from the port of Banjul, the Gambia; hawking faked articles imported from Asia; disposing of false currencies (CFA and US dollars) coming mainly from Ghana and Saudi Arabia; trafficking in arms from the former east bloc via Sierra Leone, Liberia, both Guineas and Gambia (the arms are often destined for the rebels of Casamance); fraudulent gold imports; and drug trafficking.

Most of these operations require fairly educated people who speak western languages and known how to travel and take a plane without attracting attention. The Senegalese police and western liaison police and customs officers posted in Senegal say that the former government workers hold intermediary positions in the drug trade. They are employees of Senegalese and above all foreign traffickers (Nigerian, Lebanese, Ghanaians) living in Senegal on behalf of whom they import drugs, engage in transit trafficking, look for official protection, etc. However, they are not involved in selling drugs on the domestic consumer market. Law enforcement officers add that some deflated display riches such as newly-build mansions, exclusive cars, etc., which cannot have been purchased on their known income, when they officially have an income at all. There are police officers among those who can be called “medium-level traffickers”. A customs captain is currently awaiting trial for his role in the trafficking of several kilograms of heroin. Magistrates can also be involved in the drug trade by freeing up traffickers for money or organising the sale of seized drugs.

The Informal Sector and Narcotics Distribution

The informal sector makes up over 60% of GDP, employing some 700,000 people, 45% of whom live in Dakar. It is responsible for 85% of Senegal’s construction projects. A very significant proportion of informal activity is controlled by the Murid Sufi Muslim brotherhood, founded in the late 19th century by Cheikh Amadou Bamba.

The Murids are behind the development of the peanut agri-business, of which they continue to control a large part. They have also specialized in the distribution of medicines of all kinds, including psychotropic medications (barbiturates, etc.) and amphetamine which supply one of the most common forms of drug addiction in Senegal. The medicines are either smuggled in from Gambia, or are diverted from government-controlled warehouses. They are first stocked in the Murids’ holy city of Touba, then forwarded on to Dakar, either to the “House of the Murids” or to the two main wholesale markets, one inside the capital and the other in the suburbs.

Researchers have studied the role of the Murids in the distribution of medications and narcotics. However, because of their links to the government, the Murids’ involvement in local and international trafficking of other narcotics is limited. Senegalese police say the majority of those in prison for selling marijuana, heroin, and crack on the streets are Murids. And Italian police, for example, say that nearly all of the Senegalese deported from Italy for drug trafficking belong to the Murid brotherhood. Between January 1 and October 31, 1997, some 205 Senegalese nationals were arrested in Italy for smuggling or selling narcotics (compared to 150 arrests in 1994 and 167 in 1995). They work for Italian or Nigerian organizations. This implication in the redistribution of narcotics abroad is confirmed by the study undertaken by a French researcher on heroin networks in Perpignan, France and Barcelona⁸⁶. He notes that the Murids state that they do not sell heroin to Muslims. In the same study, the Murids say they are sometimes supplied from Senegal. Other OGD sources report the involvement of Senegalese Murids in street trafficking in Paris and Brussels. However, up to now, no Murid in Senegal or abroad has officially been implicated in any case of wholesale trafficking.

Links with the Murid hierarchy and organized crime are more subtle. Some traffickers make gifts and donations to the marabouts and khalifs at the same time as businessmen and traders. Backed by such demonstrations of devotion, the traffickers then ask to be introduced to the Khalif General during the

⁸⁶ Taurus, A.: *Fin de siècle incertaine à Perpignan. Drogues, pauvreté, etc.* Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-le Mirail, 1996.

great Magal annual festival in Touba, and for instance, have their photograph taken alongside the religious leader. Then they use the picture to convince state officials that they are familiar with leading Mouride authorities in order to be issued a diplomatic passport and be allowed to accompany Senegalese authorities when they travel abroad. In Senegal they are not subjected to any form of official control. Customs have detected movements of forged dollars from Saudi Arabia that had used this kind of “networking”, and officers are convinced that drug traffickers use the same techniques.

There are other ringleaders for street distribution, in particular Nigerian traffickers. They know that they have been under close police scrutiny for some years, remain in the shadows and hire “mules” who for instance will travel to Brazil and bring back a few kilograms of cocaine for a fee of CFA500,000 (about US \$1000). The most visible sign of these Nigerians’ illicit activity is that they usually live in exclusive mansions but have no known legal source of income. However, the Senegalese that the Nigerians use as “mules” tend to become independent and set up their own networks in partnership with Lebanese and French citizens.

Large-Scale Sea and Air Transit Trafficking

The vast majority of Senegal’s trade goes through the autonomous port of Dakar, which is both a fishing and commercial port. Between 1993 and 1997, more than 30 tons of hashish and 5 tons of cocaine that went through Dakar have been either detected or seized worldwide. The drug trade enjoys high-level complicity among the customs officers posted in the port. Moreover, there is little collaboration between the port’s customs unit and the police as far as counter-narcotics is concerned.

Drugs also travel to Senegal by air. The Dakar-Yoff international airport is used by airlines around the world and by *Air Afrique*, a company partly owned by the Senegalese state. As far as cocaine is concerned, smugglers seem to prefer flying on Brazilian company *Varig* to Praia, Cape Verde, and then on local flights to Dakar. Moreover, cocaine-carrying Senegalese citizens are routinely arrested at Casablanca airport, Morocco, in transit to Europe. In 1997-1998, the connections used most often were Bogota-Caracas-Lisbon-Dakar or Bissau-Paris. As far as heroin is concerned, at first networks used Bombay-Addis Ababa-Dakar on *Ethiopian Airlines*. But during the last few years, Nigerian traffickers have started using Cape Verde as a heroin transit point. Police and customs officers at the airport lack proper equipment and training to confront the trafficking and given their low wages they are vulnerable to bribery.

GAMBIA AND GUINEA BISSAU

Gambia and Guinea Bissau are not only part of Senegal’s geographic environment, but are also closely integrated into Senegal’s grey market and official business environment on the one hand, and its political and geostrategic environment on the other.

Gambia is a country whose smuggling activities are consubstantial with the existence of the State itself, with which it furnishes the means of its existence. Smuggling initially concerned legal products such as foodstuffs, medicines, and manufactured products. But illegal products, such as psychotropic substances, drugs, and arms, were not long in borrowing the same networks. Gambia’s economic and demographic weaknesses (with only one million inhabitants), as well as its geographic situation as an enclave inside Senegal, have forced the country into transforming itself from a smuggling state to a

trafficking state. This is all the more the case in that Gambia has become a significant cannabis producer in the region.

As for Guinea Bissau, a portion of its population is ethnically Diola, as is the majority of the population in Senegal's Casamance region. The latter provided significant support for the fight for independence against the Portuguese in Guinea Bissau, led by the PAIGC, now in power in Guinea Bissau. President Nino Vieira himself married a woman from Casamance. The Guinea Bissau government in return has long supported the rebellion in Casamance, whose guerrillas have made Guinea Bissau into a safe haven and a center for marijuana trafficking. But Guinea Bissau has since improved its relations with the Senegalese government, which supported Guinea Bissau's entrance into the West African Monetary Union (UMOA). On January 5, Nino Vieira dismissed his Chief of Staff, Ansoumane Mané, a Diola accused along with other military officers of smuggling arms to the Casamance rebels. Mané and associates do not appear to have acted on purely ideological motives.

Gambia: Smuggling State

Gambia has few natural resources. Although tourism appears in official statistics as the most important source of hard currency, in reality the Gambian government earns the bulk of its resources from smuggling. Liberal economic policies, reinforced by the implementation of structural adjustment programs beginning in 1985 which resulted in lowered customs tariffs, have favored the massive import of rice and manufactured goods into Gambia. Imported rice is well above the level necessary to meet the needs of the local population. The rest is secretly re-exported to neighboring countries, Senegal in particular, where customs tariffs and domestic prices are higher than in Gambia. Cross-border smuggling between Gambia and Senegal also involves certain locally-produced goods, such as peanuts and cotton. The networks were thus already in place for the arrival of drug smuggling. Gambia has become both a consumer and a transit country for hard narcotics (cocaine and heroin), marijuana, and psychotropic medicines⁸⁷. Cannabis is also grown in Gambia, first of all for local consumption, but also for export.

Trafficking in cannabis derivatives concerns mainly marijuana from Casamance destined for Dakar, Senegal. Gambia and its coast are of necessity used in this activity. The main crossing points are determined by the presence of a ferry service, and are the towns of Banjul, Tankular, and Yelitenda. Numerous seizures of cannabis are made near these areas.

Additional large quantities are intercepted in the districts bordering Casamance: the Western Division and the Lower River Division. These two cannabis-producing regions in Gambia are an extension of the growing region in Casamance. Some farmers living on one side of the border even cross over to grow cannabis in the other country. These involve in general small crops hidden in the forest or in backyards. The expansion of the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) over the past decade has taken the territory out of the control of Senegalese government forces.

On the other hand, just across the Gambia River, northwestern Gambia is the principal production zone. Djinack Island, the focus of an OGD study, is divided between Gambia and Senegal. To avoid discovery by the authorities, cannabis there is grown either on isolated parcels of land, alone or mixed in with legal crops (these plots are located in the middle of uncultivated land), or with other legal crops on enclosed parcels of land.

⁸⁷ See GD (1996), pp. 136-137.

Eradication Reduces Farmers to Poverty

It is often said that any policeman destroying cannabis crops on Djinack Island runs the risk of being struck with madness (either the policeman himself or a member of his family). This legend, however, did not prevent the island from being the target of a vast antidrug campaign on March 26, 1998 for the first time in its history. Police destroyed all the plantations and seized all the islanders' stocks of marijuana. More than 1200 sacks, each weighing between 25 and 30 kilograms (a total of about 33 metric tons) were taken to Barra police station on the mainland. Forty-five people were arrested, then released on bail equivalent to about one year's income from the sale of cannabis. Djinack is home to 3500 people living in five villages (two of which, in the north of the island, belong to Senegal). All the families who live there, without exception, are financially dependent on cannabis cultivation, which accounts for at least 75% of their income. A kilogram nets between 500 and 600 dalasis (US \$50-\$60) for the grower and is sold for 1000 dalasis in Banjul. This expansion in cannabis production was a direct result of the long drought that hit the region between 1969 and 1985. The shortage of rainfall led to increased salinity of the soil, reducing the amount of land that could be used to grow crops. Yields fell, both of subsistence crops such as rice and cash crops like millet and peanuts. The farmers' loss of income was made worse by a general fall in crop prices on world markets — just as they were being forced to buy their own staple food.

During research carried out by the OGD in 1995 into the proportion of income earned from cannabis on smallholdings, one farmer said: "Before the drought, I used to harvest 40 sacks of rice; now I only get six." The same study, looking at how the income from cannabis was spent, showed that food was the single biggest item in the farmers' budgets. Next came education, health, and taxes. Cannabis brings in ten times more money than peanuts from the same plot of land, and 100 times more than cassava. Given the importance of the crop in families' survival, the recent police operation (which was not combined with measures to help farmers grow other crops) left many homes utterly destitute, as the families also had to use their savings to pay bail (the equivalent of \$1700-\$8500). The OGD correspondent in Gambia reports that the inhabitants are experiencing food and health problems, with children particularly hard hit. Various OGD investigations in Africa have shown that small farmers are increasingly dependent on cannabis to make a living, which is not just an obstacle to agricultural development but can also, in the long term, give rise to problems in supplying food to the cities.

Yamba: Wages in Guinea Bissau's Civil War

As of June, 1998, the violent clashes between the rebels led by General Asumane Mané, the former chief of staff of the Guinea Bissau military, and the regular forces of the national military helped by some 13,000 Senegalese troops ("Operation Gabou") and a contingent of several hundred soldiers from Guinea-Conakry were motivated by the rebels' support for the guerrillas of the Senegalese region of Casamance. General Mané rose up in arms as a protest against his being suspended by General Humberto Gomez after it was discovered that Mané had "covered" arms trafficking between Guinea-Bissau officers and the separatist leaders of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance. The weapons involved were *AK-47s*, rocket launchers, *Mausers*, bazookas and antipersonnel mines, which are crippling hundreds of people in the departments of Ossoye and Ziguinchor in Casamance. The close links between the rebels and the guerrillas were confirmed by the fact that the latter came to fight with their allies in Guinea-Bissau. *L'Autre Afrique* magazine wondered in a recent issue: "Does Asumane Mané want power or simply to keep his post and influence in order to continue making juicy 'business' deals?" A few weeks before the fighting erupted in Bissau, an OGD correspondent from Casamance, a

refugee in Guinea-Bissau, had started to answer that question by maintaining that the same networks are used to transport arms in one direction and marijuana (locally known as *yamba* or *ganja*) in the other. The marijuana was meant to be exported from the Guinean coast. The OGD correspondent added that it was probable that the cannabis had been used to pay for arms supplies and therefore that the rebellion had secret economic motives. His report described in great detail the land and sea routes used by the drugs-for-arms networks. By land, the arms leaving Bissau took several routes: Bissau-Safim-Ngoré and, from there, either to the east of Casamance, or west through Sao Domingo. Another route passes west of the first one, through Cacheu, Susana and the border town of Caçolol. The first sea route leads from Cape Roxo to the town of Cacheu, located on the Cacheu River; the second one, also starting from the coast of Casamance, goes round the islands of Jeta and Peixe and leads to the port of Bissau; the third route sails through the Bissagos archipelago and touches land in Bissau.

The near-total absence of checks at sea facilitates the transshipment between foreign vessels and local fishing boats of the illicit goods that enter and leave Guinea-Bissau. This activity takes place during the fishing season from November to June. According to the director of the judicial police, it is in the Bissagos archipelago that “a lot of transshipment takes place. But apart from the large engine-powered canoe that the French authorities have put at our disposal, we have no other means of reaching the archipelago.” In April 1998, under a military cooperation agreement with Guinea-Bissau, Portugal presented the Guinean navy with a boat in order to enhance control of its territorial waters. Drug trafficking and use, just like sexual tourism, are facilitated in the islands because European tourists and Guinean and African businessmen are never checked by the authorities.

But *ganja* is only one of the goods trafficked in Guinea-Bissau, a small country that has become a hub, as was recently confirmed by the seizure in Portugal of 75 kg of cocaine which had transited through Guinea-Bissau by plane. The prospects offered by the 16 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the 8-member West African Monetary Union (UMOA), in which Guinea-Bissau was the last country to be admitted in May 1997 have not been missed by the drug traffickers. Sebastião Dias, director of the drug squad, told the OGD correspondent that “Ghanaians and Nigerians have taken advantage of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in order to be granted political refugee status in Guinea-Bissau using forged passports.” Once in the country, they import South American cocaine, especially via Cape Verde, and ship it on to Europe, as was the case with 6 kg of cocaine seized from Ghanaian, Nigerian and Sierra Leonean traffickers in late 1997. The very large number of drug dealers and smugglers from Guinea-Bissau arrested in all the countries of Europe (above all Portugal) confirms the part played by the small Portuguese-speaking African country. While marijuana is imported from the Gambia and Casamance, amphetamine and other synthetic drugs come from Sierra Leone, via Guinea-Conakry, by land and sea. The drug market is generally booming but is given an extra boost by the partying taking place during the carnival in February and the May Day celebrations.

TOGO

Togo’s involvement in the production of cannabis and the trafficking of hard drugs is first and foremost due to its geographic location and especially its being close to two leading West African drug producing and trafficking countries. It shares a border with Ghana and is separated from Nigeria only by Benin which has a long and narrow shape similar to Togo’s. The latter is a strip of land running north-south along 600 kilometers with a width ranging from 50 km along the Atlantic to 150 km in the north.

The dynamics of cannabis production in southern Togo are a direct consequence of the crisis affecting licit cash crops (fall in world prices; political instability in rural areas; and restructuring of the cash-crop industry). Cannabis farming is a means for farmers, especially younger ones, to adapt to the new situation. The trend is all the stronger because it is supported by an increase in marijuana consumption throughout the country.

Ever since law enforcement became tougher in Nigeria in the mid-1990s, many Nigerian cocaine and heroin traffickers have moved to neighboring countries such as Ghana, Niger and Togo. In Togo, a total of 100 kilograms of heroin and cocaine were seized in 1997. The trade in hard drugs is also fueled by the economic recession and the political crisis. The two years that followed the “democratic opening” of 1991 were marked by a political instability which translated into street violence and strikes. Since then, the power of president Eyadema has been challenged while international observers have not endorsed the validity of the 1998 presidential election. Finally, corruption in the civil service and the presence of shady businessmen contribute to the development of drug trafficking and money laundering.

Cannabis Crops

Official drug law enforcement statistics for 1997 are far from giving an accurate picture of the scope of marijuana production in Togo, recording the destruction of a mere three cannabis plantations and the seizure of just one metric ton of marijuana. Indeed, cannabis, known locally as “*gué*”, has been grown in many parts of Togo since the end of World War II. However, the return of the young Togolese who fled to Ghana following the political turmoil of 1991-1993 seems to have spread illicit cultivation further, especially in the center of the country where the population is mostly Moslem. Sokodé, Togo’s second-largest city, Sotouba and Tchamba, near the border with Benin, are the main production areas.

But the OGD has collected information on cannabis cultivation in the district of Kpélé-Akata, located in the southwest about 40 kilometers from the border with Ghana. The district is part of a cocoa- and coffee-producing zone and as such has been badly hurt by the deterioration of production and marketing conditions for these crops. Cannabis first appeared in the area in the late 1980s at the initiative of Ghanaian traffickers. In the early 1990s, cannabis crops began spreading rapidly in farms across the region. Indeed, this was a period when cocoa/coffee farmers, already confronted with the ageing of their plantations for the past twenty-odd years, experienced a sharp drop in revenues due to the fall of world prices.

Unlike other parts of Africa, in Togo it is mainly the children of cocoa-coffee farmers who have become involved in cannabis production. They are usually under 30 years old and are employed on the family farm, working on plots under the responsibility of a family member (father, uncle, aunt, etc.). Therefore, it is likely that elders are aware of their younger relatives’ involvement in cannabis growing. The illicit crop makes it profitable to use the family workforce by cashing in on opportunity costs which are much lower for cannabis than for cocoa or coffee. Some cannabis producers have inherited the land they use and therefore own it fully. Others are share-croppers and part of their harvest goes to the owner of the land.

Cannabis generates such a high income per surface area that it can be grown on small patches which are easy to conceal. In the farms surveyed by OGD, cannabis was grown on plots averaging only between 0,025 hectare and 1 ha. While that is a mere 0,1% to 10% of the total land used for agriculture (including land left fallow), it makes up between 76% and 93% of the farms’ cash incomes. The first reason put forth by young farmers for becoming involved in cannabis is making money, and some insist

that the crop makes it possible to “get rich quickly”. After several years of economic hardship, the rise in the price of licit crops in 1994 did not result in a reduction of illicit farming.

The revenues obtained from cannabis are used to cover the family’s basic needs. Some may also be saved to bankroll large investments in life-style improvement (building and fitting a house), business (opening a bar or a spare-parts shops), transport (buying a bicycle or a car) and/or agriculture (food crops, poultry farming, palm plantation). Not one of those interviewed mentioned actual or planned investments in a cocoa or coffee plantation.

Cannabis seems to play the part of a temporary alternative crop allowing the transition from an activity no longer viewed as profitable by young farmers (planting cocoa or coffee) to another, more profitable one. When asked whether they would like to give up cannabis growing, interviewees generally said yes — but on condition that they find activities as lucrative as the illicit crop. A reduction in cannabis production seems unlikely in the near future.

Marijuana trafficking networks

It is likely that small amounts of Togo-grown marijuana are exported to border areas of Ghana and Benin and to Sahelian countries like Burkina Faso and Niger. However, most of the domestic production is marketed in Togo itself. Some growers sell their marijuana directly to clients living nearby, which is both more profitable and less risky.

Additionally, there are “short networks” involving one or more middlemen between the cannabis producer and the marijuana consumer, but where neither the logistical means (transport, warehousing, etc.) nor the number of people involved are large. Typically the short networks operate in provincial towns such as Atakpamé, Kara, Kpalimé, Sokodé and surrounding areas, in the villages around Lomé and in some neighbourhoods of the capital.

The third trafficking method involves large networks. These are organized on a pyramidal, hierarchical basis, just like firms, with a “boss” (a trader, a businessman, a high-level government worker, or a prominent community member), lieutenants in charge of supervising employees or managing “ghettos” – as marijuana retail outlets are called⁸⁸ –, and employees such as drivers, watchmen, ghetto attendants, etc. Their activities are vertically integrated, except for production, which is sub-contracted. It has not been possible to establish with precision just how big these large networks are, but it is likely that they are made up of several dozens of people. Such criminal organizations operate fairly large infrastructure for stockpiling and selling marijuana (private houses, warehouses, etc.) and transportation (vans, lorries and buses). It seems that in most cases this infrastructure serves both marijuana trafficking and legitimate activities — mainly wholesale or retail trade, commercial transport, coffee-cocoa buying and selling.

It is often difficult to know whether the large networks are essentially legitimate businesses which have become involved in the marijuana trade, or instead primarily criminal enterprises taking cover behind a legitimate front, since their licit and illicit activities are closely intertwined in most cases.

Large networks are therefore very profitable since they handle the whole chain of operations after production, from wholesale purchase to selling packaged doses on the semi-wholesale or retail market. Their “overhead costs” (salaries, equipment maintenance, protection, etc.) may be higher than those of

⁸⁸ See the chapter on “Gulf of Guinea: Toward a Common Drug Market?”.

“short networks”, but this negative consequence of size is offset by the considerable quantities of marijuana they can dispose of thanks to their control over the Lomé and related markets (through semi-wholesale to neighbourhood and village dealers). Another asset that makes large networks so profitable is their simultaneous functioning as above-board businesses. Finally, it must be noted that the large networks active in Togo seem to operate and be organized along the same lines as their counterparts in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria. A tell-tale sign is that some of the large-network bosses active in Togo are citizens or natives of those countries doing licit (and probably illicit) business in one or more of these countries, as well as in Togo. It is likely that these large networks, especially when they are in the hands of foreigners, also take on board the trafficking of hard drugs and money laundering.

The Transit of Hard Drugs and Money Laundering

The arrest of a Nigerian national in possession of 44.2 kg of cocaine and 5.2 kg of heroin at Lomé airport in late June 1997 confirmed Togo’s role as a drug transit hub. The trafficker, who boarded an *Ethiopian Airlines* flight in New Delhi, had concealed the drugs in the false bottoms of two suitcases. He was also carrying US \$3000 and attempted to bribe a security official at Lomé. Between January and August 1997, various countries reported seizures totalling 59 kg of cocaine and 10.5 kg of heroin that either had transited or were going to transit through Togo.

As far as hard drugs are concerned, a police source told the OGD correspondent that seizures resulted more often from rival gangs informing on one another than law enforcement’s own investigations, adding that “all the seizures are not reported”. As in other parts of Africa, the largest drug organizations are led by Nigerians, usually Ibos using international trading in second-hand clothes as a cover and Yorubas trading in various goods. Both own import/export businesses with partners in the United States and France which serve to conceal drug shipments and launder the profits.

Other networks, based locally and under police scrutiny, have been set up by Pakistani, Indian and Lebanese operators during the last two or three years. Their headquarters are the exclusive mansions where they live. The port of Lomé ranks among the preferred exit points for drugs hidden in shipments of second-hand clothes, cloth and washing powder. Customs officers are generously bribed to look the other way — several officers display wealth incommensurate with their meagre salaries. Drugs also travel by boat – mostly pirogues – with the networks smuggling gasoline from Nigeria to Lomé and Accra, also under the protection of corrupt customs agents. The official protection enjoyed by the traffickers comes to light when their providers fall into disgrace. For instance, Lieutenant Yoma Djoua, the former chief of the presidential guard, who has been serving a 35-year jail sentence since 1995 for the murder of a Togolese lawyer in order to steal his *BMW*, was heading a drug network.

Togo also constitutes a window for Ghanaian and Nigerian traffickers who want to launder money in the franc zone of West and Central Africa. Before it closed down, *BCCI* was financing the country’s foreign trade. The bank managed accounts for big businessmen of Lebanese, Indian, Pakistani, and Nigerian origin, and for the regime’s barons. Through front-companies using Togo’s banking secrecy laws, the merchants wired huge amounts of money abroad. The owner of the building where *BCCI* was operating is a Lebanese billionaire known to the police for leading a major drug and prostitution network. He also owns an exclusive hotel and a large concession in the duty-free port area. The authorities cannot get at him because he has bought political protection and the support of well-known journalists.